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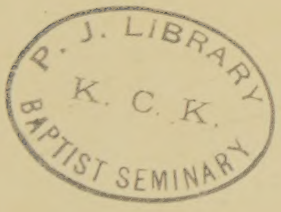

THE ETHIC OF JESUS

THE ETHIC OF JESUS

According to the Synoptic Gospels

BY THE

REV. JAMES STALKER, M.A., D.D.

Author of

"IMAGO CHRISTI," "THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST," "THE PREACHER AND HIS MODELS," "THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JESUS," "THE ATONEMENT," ETC.

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TO

THE REV. HUGH R. MACKINTOSH, PHIL.D., D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,

AND

THE REV. FRED. J. RAE, M.A.,

THE MINISTERS OF BEECHGROVE CONGREGATION,

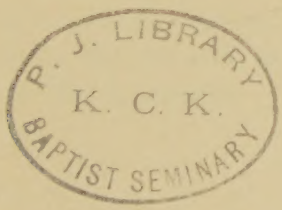
OF WHICH I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER

SINCE EXCHANGING THE PULPIT FOR THE CHAIR,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

IN TOKEN OF EDIFICATION AND DELIGHT

DERIVED FROM THEIR MINISTRATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP



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PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EDITION

The Ethic of Jesus by James Stalker was first published in 1909. At that time the author pointed out a growing interest in the social interpretation of the Gospels and prophesied an era with an increasing amount of literature on the subject. That prophecy was fulfilled and the reader will recall the years when the writing and preaching of the Social Gospel was quite the thing. The world has changed a great deal since then, though we have not yet, by any means, entered the millennium and today thoughtful men are not quite so sure of their enthusiasms. We are beginning to appreciate anew that the great problems of life are not the problems of the mass but the facts of sin, personal righteousness, repentance and the spiritual development of the individual. When we consider these themes this book seems surprisingly new and up-to-date and gives the reader the best work on the ethical teachings of Jesus that is available.

PREFACE

THIS book has been intentionally so written as to be capable of being read as a whole by itself; yet it is connected with *The Christology of Jesus*, already published, and *The Mind of Jesus as reported by St. John*, still to be published; and the author has to refer the curious reader to the first of these for the explanation of two things—the view taken of the criticism of the Gospels and the reason for deriving the materials of this volume, as of the preceding one, from the Synoptists only.

Of monographs on the ethical teaching of our Lord there are not many as yet; but the subject receives treatment more or less ample in works on Christian Ethics in general, as well as in those on New Testament Theology; and some guidance to these treasures will be found in the footnotes.

But the peculiarity of this attempt is that it always draws directly on the words of Jesus themselves, to the study of which, in both their great masses and their minutest fragments, the author has devoted the

labour of a lifetime. For this reason great importance is attached to the collection of texts facing the first page of each chapter, by which the reader will be able to control the representation given of each theme and to estimate the importance to be attached to it.

It may not, indeed, be always the case that the topics on which our Lord spoke most copiously were the most important or those on which He spoke but little the least important in His eyes. It requires a happy intuition so to distribute light and shade as to bring out the relative proportions of the parts and the shape of the whole. How far the author has succeeded in thus reproducing the mind of Christ it is not easy for him to judge; but he is not without hope that those in the future who will grasp the Master's drift more justly and reach farther down into the depths of this teaching will recognise him as a fellow-student, who has not shrunk from labour and to whom the subject has been inexpressibly dear.

To the Rev. Charles Shaw, Dundee, thanks are rendered for assistance in revising the proofs.

ABERDEEN, 1 *September*, 1909.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: WHAT IS ETHIC?

ONE feature of the teaching of our Lord about which there can be no mistake is, that He was an ethical teacher. This lies on the very surface; for, let the reader open the record of His words where he will, it is on an ethical matter that he comes. The Sermon on the Mount, for example, is filled with this element from beginning to end. If there be matter of a different kind in the words of Jesus, it has to be sought for, and does not lie on the surface. Of course it is possible that the element which is the less conspicuous may be the more important; in which case we shall have to seek for it as for hidden treasure. But the element which is the more copious has a claim of its own on this very account; and we may begin with some attempt to define its character and scope.

In looking about for a clue to guide us in arranging the vast mass of the ethical teaching of Jesus, it is natural to try, first, the division of this kind of matter adopted by systematic thinkers in the ethical sphere. Now, from of old it has been under-

stood that the science of Ethics is concerned with three subjects—the Highest Good, Virtue and Duty —and, by a brief consideration of these ancient philosophical terms, or their modern equivalents, we may obtain some preliminary notion of the extent of the field within which Jesus is to be our teacher, and we may find a clue for the arrangement of our materials.

First, then, let us consider which topics come within the range of the Highest Good.

In speaking of the Highest Good as the theme of Ethics, Aristotle observes: "Every art and every kind of inquiry, and likewise every act and purpose, seems to aim at some good; and, since there are many kinds of actions, and many arts and sciences, it follows that there are many ends also. *E.g.*, health is the end of medicine, ships of shipbuilding, victory of the art of war, and wealth of economy. But, when several of these are subordinated to some one art or science, as the making of bridles and other trappings to the art of horsemanship, and this in turn, along with all else that a soldier does, to the art of war, and so on, then the end of the master-art is always more desired than the end of the subordinate arts, since these are pursued for its sake. And, if in what we do there be some end which we wish for on its own account, choosing all the others as means to this, this will evidently be the best of all things.

And surely from a practical point of view it much more concerns us to know this good; for then, like archers shooting at a definite mark, we shall be more likely to attain what we want." *

When, in the Middle Ages, the teaching of Aristotle was revived, it was in the Latin language that men taught and learned; and the term employed to express Aristotle's ideal was *summum bonum*, which, accordingly, became a constant topic of discussion among moralists. Pursuing the same line of reflection as Aristotle, we may say that in life there are thousands of good things. There may be a separate one for every day and for every situation; but the smaller ones run up into the larger, and the lower into the higher; and there must be at the top one supreme good, to the attainment of which all the rest serve as means. To determine what this is may seem to require a great effort of abstract thought; but it is, indeed, a very practical question. No human being ought to be willing to live and die without tasting the very best which life can afford. The very humblest may, in moments of meditation, inquire, With what purpose has my Maker sent me into the world? what is the object, which, if secured, will make life a success but, if missed, will make it a failure? This, however, is nothing else but the ultimate problem of Ethics.

* *Nicomachean Ethics* (Peters' translation), i. 1, 2. Some sentences omitted.

In the foregoing extract from Aristotle, it may be observed that the word "end" is sometimes employed as an equivalent for the substantive "good"; and "chief end" has sometimes been used in English as a synonym for "highest good," with the result that the idea involved has been made familiar to sections of the population not generally conversant with philosophical speculations. Especially has this been the case in Scotland, where the first question of the Shorter Catechism, "What is man's chief end?" has for centuries been nearly the first thing learned in the home or the school. It will bear a great deal of reflection why this should have been the first question proposed for every young mind to ponder. It seems to imply at least that the chief end or highest good is something which profoundly concerns everyone; so that even the youngest should, at the earliest opportunity, have their attention directed to it. It is true, there are questions which ought to be asked and answered at the very commencement of life but, in the majority of cases, are not put till its close; and this may be one of them. In point of fact, those who have reflected with any earnestness on the subject may be few in number. Yet it is the prerogative of a thinking being to know for what end he has been sent into the world, and why he is now alive; and those who have ever reflected deeply on such questions at all will probably reflect on them with growing interest as

the years go by, and be found still brooding on them even in old age. The saying of Thomas Carlyle, in later life, is well known, that he was often thinking of the first question he had learned out of the Shorter Catechism and of the wonderful answer to it.

Both the Highest Good and Man's Chief End may be phrases from which the modern man has grown away; but the idea expressed by them is one that can never grow old and for which every generation will have to find substitutes of its own. In modern phraseology, perhaps, the commonest phrase for the same notion would be the Ideal of Human Life. At present the need of ideals is widely recognised. Though the majority may have none which they have avowed to themselves, yet all have them who have thought seriously about life. It is no easy matter, indeed, to keep hold of an ideal; it slips away amidst the excitements of society and the pre-occupations of business; it is compromised amidst the onsets of temptation and the accesses of passion; but it must be recaptured and set up as the signal and standard of everyone who has not abandoned the struggle for a life which is more than mere existence. Now, he who has an ideal ought to be able to name it; and to do so correctly is the purpose of Ethics.

Secondly, let us consider the range of topics which would be embraced under a discussion of Virtue.

Virtue was a great word in the ancient world ; and in modern times also it has sometimes held a prominent place in discussions of this nature. Of late, however, it has rather lost popularity, for reasons which we need not stop at present to investigate ; and other terms would now be substituted in its room. Of these the commonest is Character ; and everyone would understand what was meant by the statement that the formation of character was the theme of Ethics. Indeed, two books on Ethics bearing this title have been published within the last few years.*

Not only, however, would Character be now preferred, as a name, to Virtue, but the modern mind would assign it a more sacred position and a higher value. To Aristotle the welfare of the State was the supreme object, and, in his philosophical scheme, Ethics formed a branch of politics. To him personal character was important, but only as a means to an end—as the means of producing an effective citizen. To the modern mind, on the contrary, character is an ultimate good, sacred above all other objects and deserving of pursuit for its own sake. To the ancient mind virtue appeared desirable in citizens, because a state composed of virtuous citizens is strong ; by the modern mind every political arrangement is tested by the kind of man it produces.

* One of these, Maccunn's *The Making of Character*, is, I can vouch, well worth reading.

Character is the one possession that is elevated above the vicissitudes of fortune. Everything else may be lost; but, if this remain, he to whom it belongs has still the best of life. To an ancient Greek, success in life was inconceivable without a certain amount of good fortune; but, the moment character is recognised in its absolute worth, it becomes evident that what is called misfortune may be no less advantageous than good fortune; because character is developed by losses and crosses no less than by prosperity. Indeed, while prosperity tempts to the relaxation of moral effort, adversity makes the foolish not infrequently consider; and the very finest developments of character are rarely attained without a considerable amount of suffering. This places the whole of the less fortunate side of experience in a new light and breaks the force of merely worldly considerations.

Life is simply everyone's chance of obtaining character; and the life of everyone will, at its close, be pronounced a success or a failure, not on account of the material objects he has accumulated or the pleasant sensations he has enjoyed, but on account of that which he has become. By this, we have reason to believe, his station and degree will be fixed in the eternal world; but, at any previous stage, it will always, to a person gifted with sufficient reflection, seem to be a question of supreme moment to ask, "Am I a good man or a bad?" and especially,

"Am I becoming better or worse?" The answer to this question, given from point to point in any one's career, is his real history.

Still, the ancient way of thinking and speaking of character as virtue had its advantages, and among these this one especially, that the term Virtue suggested the virtues of which it was composed. These were the elements which go to the formation of a good character; and in classical times they were reckoned to be four—namely, wisdom, temperance, courage and justice. Ancient systems of Ethics largely consist of the definition and description of these virtues, with illustrations of their action in the lives of the heroes of Greek and Roman history. Later, the three Christian virtues—faith, hope and love—were added to the pagan ones; and human excellence was believed to consist in the harmonious blending of all seven. This is, for example, the scheme of the great ethical work of Thomas Aquinas, which forms the second half of his *Summa*; and extraordinary ingenuity is shown by this greatest of the schoolmen in bringing the whole circle of human life within this survey.

While, however, the details of character require to be exhibited one by one, it is still more necessary to trace back the virtues to virtue itself. There is a unity of character as well as a multiplicity of characteristics. And here our modern term has the advantage. Philosophers have discussed the ques-

tion, whether virtue or the virtues be the *prius*, and they have leaned towards the latter alternative; but Christian philosophy would incline in the opposite direction, for it lays supreme stress on motives; and there must be at work one motive, simple, pure and commanding, in the formation of any character entitled to be reckoned good or great.

Aristotle has some penetrative remarks on the mode in which virtue is acquired and perfected. "None of the virtues," he observes, "is implanted in us by nature; for that which is by nature cannot be altered by training. For instance, a stone naturally tends to fall downwards, and you could not train it to rise upwards, though you tried to do so by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor could you train fire to move downwards, nor accustom anything which naturally behaves in one way to behave in any other way. Where we do things by nature, we get the power first, and put this power forth in act afterwards; as we plainly see in the case of the senses; for it is not by constantly seeing and hearing that we acquire these faculties; but, on the contrary, we had the power first and then used it, instead of acquiring the power by use. But the virtues we acquire by doing the acts, as is the case with the arts also. It is by harping that good harpers and bad harpers are produced; and so with builders and the rest; by building well they will become good builders, and bad builders by building badly. And it is just the

same with the virtues also. It is by our conduct in our intercourse with other men that we become just or unjust, and by acting in circumstances of danger and training ourselves to feel fear or confidence that we become courageous or cowardly. So, too, with our animal appetites and the passion of anger; for, by behaving in this way or that on the occasions with which these passions are concerned, some become temperate and gentle, and others profligate and ill-tempered. In a word, acts of any kind produce habits or character of the same kind. Hence we ought to make sure that our acts be of a certain kind, because the resulting character varies as they vary." *

Although instinct with wisdom, these remarks raise many questionable points, which go down to the very foundations; but on the discussion of these I need not now enter, the mere words of the passage being sufficient to indicate the vast scope of the inquiry; and this is all at which I am at present aiming.

Thirdly, we come to the topics embraced in the notion of Duty.

This is undoubtedly the mode of conceiving Ethics which falls in most with popular habits of thought. In even the rudest states of society, long before any such ideas as the Highest Good and Virtue have formed themselves in the public mind, there exist

* *Nicomachean Ethics*, ii. 1. Some sentences omitted.

certain impressions of things that ought not to be done; and the earliest attempts at legislation are designed to fix these firmly in the public mind. Laws like those of the Twelve Tables at Rome or those of Solon at Sparta are hung up in the market-place, that they may wear themselves into the minds of the citizens through constant repetition; or the world is put in possession of a code like the Ten Commandments, which, when lodged in the memory, easily suggests a hundred details of duty.

Duty always presupposes a table of laws which have to be fulfilled; but it is one of the most difficult tasks of Ethics to determine whence such a table is derived. Is it a primitive writing on the conscience, which experience is, indeed, needed to reveal, but which exists in all mankind alike from their birth? is it a positive revelation like that at Mount Sinai, where the voice of the Almighty thundered forth the law and His finger inscribed it on tables of stone, and has it been propagated from the people of Jehovah to the other races of the earth? or is it the slowly accumulated experience of the race, which, having in the course of time tested every alternative of conduct, has thereby made up its mind as to the benefits resulting from certain acts and the disadvantages flowing from others, and has so steadily rewarded the one class and punished the other, that its convictions now pass almost unconsciously from one generation to another,

invested with religious awe? This question as to the origin of the moral law and the nature of the sanction by which it is supported is the one which has especially attracted the English mind, and our native ethical writers have discussed it so zealously that they have, as a rule, paid comparatively little attention to the task of enumerating the duties in detail which the moral law sanctions or arranging these in systematic form.*

This blank has, however, been admirably filled up by the ethical thinkers of other countries, who have pursued Duty into every secret corner and constructed the whole map of life,† showing what has to be done and what avoided in every conceivable situation. With this in view, all the different relations into which the individual can enter—such as the family, the State, the Church—have been comprehensively canvassed, for it is in these that the duties of the individual come to light; and every position which the individual can occupy in relation to others —such as that of superior, inferior and equal—has been considered. Thus does the scope of Ethics

* An exception ought, however, to be recognised in Richard Baxter, who is deserving of a more prominent place than he has received in the history of philosophy. His *Christian Directory*, divided into Christian Ethics, Christian Economics, and Christian Politics, discusses with the skill of a practised casuist innumerable details of conduct.

† *The Map of Life* is the happy title of a recent work on Ethics from the pen of Mr. Lecky, the historian.

expand on every hand; for, in connection with the family, such problems as love, marriage, divorce and the like have to be treated; and, in connection with the State, the still more difficult problems of war, legislation, capital and labour and the like. To the ordinary mind morality appears a simple affair, and it is often said that a man can be in no situation in which he cannot easily discover what his duty is, if he has an honest desire to know it;* but, when the relations of Church and State, of capital and labour, of nation and nation are recognised as included within the scope of Ethics, the subject becomes exceedingly intricate, and, although the guidance supplied by a good conscience is by no means to be disparaged, yet it has to be recognised that morality is a region in which both the race and the individual still stand in dire need of instruction.

From whatever source, however, the knowledge of duty may be derived, there is, in every case, at last an alternative presented to the will—to act in accordance with the law or in defiance of it—and, when the choice is made and the moment of decision past, there is left in the mind either the satisfaction of duty done or the sense of guilt on account of

* "Let any plain, honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, 'Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil?' I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstances."—BISHOP BUTLER: *Third Sermon on Human Nature.*

failure or transgression. These are among the most peculiar and august feelings of our nature, and they have a momentous part to play in the regulation of conduct and the deepening of experience.

The oftener either the right or the wrong choice is made, the easier is it to repeat the same; that is to say, the ability to do right is strengthened by practice, and, by the same psychological law, the heart is hardened in a guilty course. Gradually, to act either on the side of conscience or in the opposite direction becomes a habit, and the general drift of the life is determined accordingly. But may this current become so strong so as to leave no room for choice? In other words, is the will free? This is the most fundamental question of Ethics, and it has given rise, not only to enormous quantities of speculation, but to no little confusion of thought. The freedom of the will has been denied in the interest of theological orthodoxy by those holding strong views of the depravity of human nature and the absolute sovereignty of God in the work of redemption; it has been denied in the interest of humanitarianism by persons so impressed by the heavy burden of heredity transmitted by criminals to their offspring that they have yearned to relieve the latter from the weight of responsibility; it is denied in the interest of materialism by those who look upon nature—human life and individual action included—as an uninterrupted series of causes and effects, flowing on with mechanical

and inexorable regularity. But, while it is acknowledged that the exact definition of liberty is difficult, on the whole the testimony of consciousness to the reality of moral choices is too clear and universal to be contravened; all men's judgments of one another are built upon it, and without it no science of Ethics would be possible.

Thus have I given a bird's-eye view of the scope of Ethics, and of the different fields into which its vast territory is divided; although careful ethical philosophers are wont to point out that the three ideas of the Highest Good, Virtue and Duty do not designate different portions of the territory so much as different ways of viewing the same subject. The entire field of Ethics can be surveyed from each of these points of view. Yet there is a wide difference between the three things. The Highest Good is the end of moral action; Virtue or Character is the animating force by which this goal is to be attained; and Duty prescribes the path along which the end must be sought.*

* A penetrative discussion of the Highest Good, Virtue and Duty, as the three main ethical conceptions, will be found in a work of the younger Dorner, *Das menschliche Handeln*, pp. 287–329. Those disposed to think out the subject further for themselves may, with advantage, try these three conceptions in the opposite order—Ethics, first, as the doctrine of Duty, or conformity to law and custom; second, as Virtue, the power of doing duty acquired by long and conscientiously doing it; third, as the Highest Good, which is the reward of well-doing. There

The reason why I have considered it desirable to dwell so long on a description of the ethical field is because this is the territory in which Jesus as a teacher moves; and the different questions suggested are those on which guidance from Him is received. To this it may be objected, that our Lord was no philosopher or systematic teacher, but a preacher to the people, who moved from subject to subject without constraint, and whose words have all the freedom and naturalness generally lacking in schemes of philosophy. Nothing could be more true; and yet at the back of the mind of Jesus there must have been, consciously or unconsciously, a connection between thought and thought—in short, a view of the universe, and especially of human life, to which it is the task of science to work back through the close and connected study of His words.

In the sequel we shall frequently have to emphasize the contrast between the teaching of Jesus and that of philosophy, but all the more on this account may we commence with recognising the fundamental identity. If Jesus was Supreme Master in the ethical

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has been frequent discussion about the propriety of applying this threefold division to Christian Ethics in general; and opinion has of late been rather going against it. Schleiermacher, though employing it in his Philosophical Ethics, did not make use of it in his great (posthumous) work on Christian Ethics, *Die Christliche Sitte*, but Rothe reverted to it in his *Theologische Ethik*. I do not remember to have seen it applied before to the ethical teaching of Jesus.

domain, His ideas will be found to fit into the map of this domain made by science, provided science has been successful in her own task of delimiting and dividing the field. In point of fact, it will, I believe, be found that the answers proceeding from the Great Teacher are directed to the very problems on which the human mind has always been pondering. I have no intention of crushing into an artifical framework the unconstrained teaching of Jesus ; but His words will arrange themselves, without any force, under the headings of the Highest Good, Virtue and Duty. These conceptions will enable us to classify the subjects with which His mind and teaching were occupied ; and, by keeping this scheme before us, we shall be able to obtain a comprehensive grasp of His doctrine as a whole. It is not my intention to stick anxiously to this division ; to do so would be out of harmony with the nature of the subject. I will use it as a clue, not as a fetter ; but, I am satisfied, it will be a distinct advantage to keep it in view and to recur to it from time to time.

PART FIRST

THE HIGHEST GOOD

THE GOSPEL OR BLESSEDNESS

Matt. iv. 23.
ix. 35.
xi. 5.
xxiv. 14.
xxvi. 13.

Mark i. 1, 14, 15.
viii. 35.
x. 29.
xiii. 10.
xiv. 9.
xvi. 15.

Luke i. 19.
ii. 10.
iv. 18, 43.
vii. 22.
viii. 1.
ix. 6.
xvi. 16.
xx. 1.

Matt. xi. 3-11.
xiii. 16.
xvi. 17.
xxiv. 46.

Luke vi. 20-23.
vii. 23.
x. 23, 28.
xi. 28.
xii. 37, 38, 43.
xiv. 14, 15-24.
xv. 22-24.
xxiv. 36.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL OR BLESSEDNESS

WHEN Aristotle and the ancient thinkers spoke of the Highest Good, their meaning was, that, in this earthly life of ours, there is for everyone a single supreme attainment, which, if missed, will render life a failure but, if gained, will render it a success. And it can escape the notice of no attentive reader of the Gospels that the same truth underlies, as an assumption, the entire teaching of Jesus, besides being expressed by Him in a variety of forms. This, for example, is what is intended in such parables as the Pearl of Great Price and the Hidden Treasure, which imply that this world affords to everyone a supreme opportunity of making life worth living. The same is implied in His frequent promise to give "life" to those who come to Him.* But the most obvious expression of this intention is the constant use by Jesus of the word Gospel as a comprehensive name for His message.

* Matt. vii. 14; xviii. 8, 9; xix. 16, 17, 29; xxv. 46; Mark ix. 43, 45; x. 30; Luke xviii. 30. So "peace," Mark v. 34; Luke vii. 50; and "rest," Matt. xi. 29.

In its original sense, this term * summons up in the imagination the picture of a city in a state of uncertainty and anxiety. The watchmen on the walls are looking eagerly in a certain direction. At last a messenger is descried in the distance, his manner of running betokening that he is the bearer of glad tidings. At the gate of the city he is met by the multitude, who crowd round him. He unfolds his tale, which rapidly passes from mouth to mouth and from group to group, till the whole city is rocking with excitement and jubilation. St. Matthew enters exactly into the spirit of such a scene when he describes the commencement of the preaching of Jesus in these words: "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up"; and the descriptions in all the Gospels of the opening ministry of our Lord, when the inhabitants of city and village came streaming in thousands from one end of the country to the other, to hear His preaching and profit by His miracles, entirely correspond to such a situation. In the later stages of the earthly course of Jesus this sunny aspect of His ministry may not have been so conspicuous; but it reasserted itself in the early preaching of the apostles after the Resurrection. Wherever St. Paul, for example, went as a missionary, he must have conveyed the impression that he was bringing tidings

* Τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

which it concerned everyone to hear for his own welfare and happiness; and, in spite of the persecutions he had to endure, he himself was borne up with the sense that he was the bearer of a secret of infinite value. This is the fundamental note of Christianity at all times; the salt has lost its savour if the preaching of the Christian pulpit does not convey an impression of gladness, novelty and surprise.

When, however, we take the next step and inquire about the contents of the good news of which Jesus was the herald, the reply is not exactly what might be anticipated. If the ordinary man were asked what the Gospel of Jesus was about, he would reply without hesitation that it was the gospel "of salvation," or "of the grace of God," or perhaps "of justification by faith." But, if requested to verify his statement by reference to the actual words of Christ, he would scarcely be able to produce from the record a trace of such phraseology. What he would find, in place of it, would be "the gospel of the kingdom," or "the gospel of the kingdom of God," or "the gospel of the kingdom of heaven," all these forms of the same phrase occurring in the Gospels, and being constantly employed as comprehensive expressions for the message delivered by our Lord and the apostles. Thus "the Gospel" may be called the envelope in which the message of Jesus comes, while "the kingdom" is the message itself.

The tendency has prevailed of late to pass the former term lightly by and concentrate attention on the latter. But this is an envelope which conveys a message of its own, besides the one which it encloses: there lies a deep significance in the fact that the most comprehensive name for the teaching of Jesus is the Gospel, as well as in the other fact that this gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The Gospel is the superior idea, beneath which the other is subsumed; and it is not a matter of indifference which is taken first. In our Lord's conceptions of Himself and of His plan there mingle two elements—the one temporary and local, the other universal and eternal—and, while the former of these might come under the general title of "the Kingdom," the latter would naturally be described as "the Gospel." At present there is on the Continent a very active school of young theologians who start from the former side, emphasizing the messianic element in the consciousness of Jesus. They maintain that, like every other historical character, Jesus was the creature of His age, and must be interpreted as a product of the conditions amidst which He was born and brought up. Hence they throw themselves with avidity on the literary remains of the age immediately preceding His birth. These are principally of the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphical order, and to the ordinary reader a weariness of the flesh; but to such enthusiasts nothing is discouraging, and

they are editing the relics of one of the most arid epochs of the human mind with wonderful perseverance, and pouncing upon every word and phrase bearing any resemblance to an anticipation of a thought of Jesus. According to them, Jesus was confined within the circle of the ideas of His time, and His conception of Himself and His own career was entirely messianic. When at last His death was impending and manifestly inevitable, He took refuge in the notion of a second coming, when He should achieve all the glory which He had expected but which had failed to accrue to Him at His first appearance. In this belief He died, and He bequeathed the illusion to His followers, who all expected Him to reappear within a generation.

It cannot be denied that for all this a great deal that is plausible may be said, or that a large number of the sayings of Jesus can be quoted in support of it. But there is an opposite side of His consciousness, which is left entirely unexplained. It can be proved from His words that He foresaw and foretold a slow and gradual development of His cause such as history has actually exhibited; and nothing is more certain than that He expected to be put by His death into a new and world-wide relationship to men. No theory of His consciousness which does not do justice to such facts can be regarded with confidence.

This is well expressed by Harnack in his recently

published work, *The Essence of Christianity*, and his words are all the more interesting because of his near kinship with the school just referred to. "Certainly," he remarks, "the task of the historian is difficult and responsible when he has to separate kernel from shell, what is inherited from what is original, in the preaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God. How far dare we go? We must not take from this preaching its native quality and colour, converting it into a bloodless moral system. But, on the other hand, we must not lose its peculiar power by acting as those do who resolve the whole into a complex of contemporary fancies. The way in which Jesus Himself distinguished among the ideas of His contemporaries, casting none aside in which there was a spark of ethical power, and adopting none by which the ambitious expectations of His fellow-countrymen would have been strengthened, proves that He spoke and preached out of a deeper knowledge than theirs. But we possess much more striking proofs. He who desires to know what the kingdom of God and the coming of this kingdom mean in the preaching of Jesus must read and ponder His parables. There it will dawn upon him what Jesus is thinking about. The kingdom comes when it comes to the individual, making entry to the soul which embraces it. The kingdom is the reign of God, no doubt; but it is the reign of the holy God in individual hearts, it is God Himself with His power. Everything dramatic, in

the external and historical sense, here disappears, and the whole external hope of a future upon earth also sinks out of sight. Take any parable you please—that of the Sower, or that of the Pearl of Great Price, or that of the Treasure hidden in the Field—and you perceive that the Word of God, or rather God Himself, is the kingdom; and what you are reading about is not angels or devils, thrones or principalities, but God and the soul, the soul and its God."*

These eloquent observations ought to do something to divert the young theologians of Professor Harnack's country, who are at present turning their zeal so earnestly to the study of the words of Christ, from divagations into paths where there is no thoroughfare. The hint is a wise one that it is in His teaching about the individual that the essence of our Lord's preaching even on the subject of the kingdom is to be found. Some of our own scholars at present, in their eagerness to find in the teaching of Jesus a justification for the social ideas by which they are themselves possessed, have represented His originality as consisting in the deliverance of mankind from an individual and selfish view of religion through the introduction of a religion of brotherhood and common endeavour. But such a representation can only be made through oblivion of the facts of the case. The conception of religion as a corporate

* From the close of the Third Lecture.

impulse, so far from being a discovery of Jesus, was common to the whole ancient world. It is specially the view of the Old Testament, in which both the reproofs and the promises of the prophets are, as a rule, addressed not to the individual but to the nation at large; and only slowly and dimly, as the Book is drawing to its close, does the idea emerge that the individual is capable of a personal relation to God. In next chapter we shall see that in the great conception of the kingdom of God the social aspect of religion is acknowledged; but the originality of Christ consisted not in emphasizing this, but in seizing on the emergent notion of the dignity and value of the individual soul and elevating it to the forefront; so that preachers are not going back to Christ, but going back beyond Him, to a pre-Christian stage of religion, if, instead of magnifying the individual and straining every nerve for his salvation, they wander away to the social or ecclesiastical organism, making this their principal care and the leading element of their testimony.

Professor Harnack's pronouncement, just quoted, may be looked upon as the summing-up of a controversy as to the nature of the kingdom spoken of by Jesus which has been raging for several years; and the conclusion seems to be that, amidst all the variety and picturesqueness of the sayings in the Gospels on the subject, the deepest and most significant element is not that which is coloured with

local and temporary allusions, but that which is more interior and out of time. Of such perhaps the most remarkable of all is the saying: "The kingdom of God is within you." It is true, the translation is disputed: the words rendered "within you"* may possibly mean "among you." But the whole context leads up to the more solemn meaning. Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom should come; to which He replied, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." The last word† is an astronomical term, suggesting that those who had questioned Him expected to see the kingdom come in the very way in which some at the present day assume He was always expecting it Himself—that is, descending in bodily shape from the sky. But this He absolutely denies, going on to add, "Neither shall they say, Lo here, or, Lo there." It is not to be a sensational spectacle. "For, behold," He concludes, "the kingdom of God is within you." Surely this means that it is a thing of the heart, hidden away from all observation—a secret blessedness, known only to him who has received it and to God.‡

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* ἐντὸς ὑμῶν.

† παρατήρησις.

‡ The rendering "within you" is confirmed by one of the logia recovered by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt: "Jesus saith, (Ye ask, Who are these) that draw us (to the kingdom, if) the kingdom is in heaven? . . . the fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea (these are they which draw) you, and the kingdom

With this agrees well the parable of the kingdom which the late Dr. Bruce used to consider the most beautiful of all our Saviour's sayings on this subject, "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This exquisite picture of a seed unfolding slowly and unobserved, but surely and prosperously, till it attains to ripeness and perfection, is not a description of a political development, but of the interior life in its most sacred aspects. Harnack's observation, that it is in the parables that the true genius of the kingdom announced by Jesus is to be discovered, is a happy one; and what these specially suggest, as they are read over one by one, is, that Jesus meant by the kingdom a spiritual principle, secretly and firmly seizing the soul, and pervading it slowly but increasingly as a leaven, till it has leavened the whole lump; it is a spiritual discovery, which fills the soul with joy, and causes every sacrifice to appear cheap, if only the matchless prize can be secured. In short, it is "the Gospel."

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of heaven is within you (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν); and whoever shall know himself shall find it. (Strive therefore) to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the (almighty) Father; (and) ye shall know that ye are in (the city of God), and we are (the city)."

In harmony with the foregoing argument is the fact that another great inaugural word of the preaching of Jesus was Blessedness—the very term by which an interior joy would most naturally be described. It was with this keynote He commenced the Sermon on the Mount; and not only did He prefix it to that grand utterance, but He made it ring out no fewer than eight times, eliciting the entire octave of its music.

The drift of the Beatitudes has often been misunderstood. They have been supposed to describe the characteristics of true Christians, pronouncing those blessed who possess such-and-such qualities. But the structure is much more complex. The justification of the predicate "blessed" lies not in the possession of a certain character, but in the consequences proceeding therefrom and indicated in each beatitude by a subordinate clause introduced by "for." In some cases the statement of the beatitude would be a violent paradox without this addition. For example, one of the Beatitudes says, "Blessed are they that mourn"; and, if we stop there, the statement is almost equivalent to the absurd saying, "Happy are the unhappy." The addition, however, of the words, "for they shall be comforted," makes all the difference. The blessedness consists not in mourning, but in being comforted; at any rate it consists not only in mourning, but also in being comforted. And the same principle applies to all

the Beatitudes. Each of them is an equation, on the one side of which stands "blessed," while on the other there are two quantities—the one a character or condition, and the other a gift to be given to those who are found in this condition. In several cases the condition is a minus quantity—that is to say, the character alone would be the reverse of blessed—but the gift introduced by "for," is a magnitude so great that, when both are united, the minus disappears, and only a substantial plus is visible. Thus, mourning, hungering, persecution are not in themselves and by themselves desirable, but the reverse; yet, taken along with what is given by Jesus to those thus circumstanced, they are blessedness itself.

The gifts thus specified will enable us in some degree to fill up our Lord's conception of Blessedness.

One of them is mercy. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." No claim of Jesus in the days of His flesh was more characteristic than the assertion that He had power to forgive sins. This must be, for all, the initial blessing of the kingdom.

Another of the Beatitudes says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To "see God" is a well known Old Testament expression; it is a metaphor borrowed from Oriental courts, where access to the sovereign was deemed a precious privilege, while to approach without permission might

involve even loss of life. This etiquette of royalty was transferred to God, who was conceived as a great King, dwelling in a palace so brilliant as to be dark with excess of light, where He was surrounded with an innumerable bodyguard of angels and archangels, which mortals were not permitted to pass. But to receive such permission would be felicity; and so the Hebrew poets sang, "Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place?" The mind of Jesus, being steeped in such imagery, clothed in this form the thought which, imagery apart, is a promise of complete access to God. To be in the kingdom of God is not only to obtain mercy, as even a criminal might, but to have communion with God and to enjoy His society.

This is expressed in a style still more tender in another of these Beatitudes, which says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." To "see God" is the privilege of a courtier, but a child is in the house forever. This was the very name under which the consciousness possessed by Jesus of His own relation to God was expressed: He was, according to His own frequent statements, "the Son." And those who receive the kingdom are in a real sense the sons of God and the brethren of Jesus.

These elements of blessedness are lofty; but are they not too lofty? Does not the happiness of ordinary humanity depend, at least in some degree,

on conditions more sublunary and prosaic? Certainly it does; and, therefore, we are glad to find among the Beatitudes one at least which touches the ground: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." In its form this recalls the promise of Canaan to ancient Israel; and, in fact, it is a verbatim quotation from one of the Psalms. But obviously it has a wider and more human scope, applying to the whole world, and not only to the Holy Land. At first sight, indeed, it seems a paradox; for is it not, on the contrary, the prerogative of the proud and the ambitious to inherit the world? So it may seem; yet there are not lacking instances, which will occur to everyone, tending to prove that, after the conqueror and oppressor has stormed out his little day, those whom he has overlooked or trodden underfoot may appear on the scene and take possession of his conquests. This, at any rate, is a promise that those who are fighting on the side of righteousness shall not lack the footing they require to deliver their blows, and that those whose hearts are set on the extension of the kingdom of God shall have room and verge enough in a world of which God is the Author and Governor.

There are some of the gifts mentioned in the Beatitudes which may be passed by at this stage, because they will come up for notice more appropriately at a later stage; but the last beatitude of all—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and

persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven"—brings out the most important feature of all in the blessedness promised by Jesus—namely, that it will be experienced not only in this world, but in the next—perhaps one ought to say, not in this world, but the next, or at least, more in the next than in this world.

Jesus refers often to this everlasting nature of the blessedness He gives, and always with decision and enthusiasm. Herein lies one of the grand contrasts between Him and the teachers who went before Him, not only among the heathen but even among the Jews. In the Old Testament there is many a gloomy page where death seems to be spoken of as the end of everything, while the indications of an opposite description are few and far between. Still there are in the Old Testament at least the germs of an immortal hope; and these would appear to have ripened in the interval between the Old Testament and the New, as the literary remains of that period testify. Yet it is not likely that it was from this source that Jesus derived His faith in this mystery, eagerly as we may believe Him to have perused any such hints accessible to Him. His doctrine on this subject is all His own. It is too fresh and original to have been obtained second-hand. He speaks as one who has been there; and the statement of the

New Testament is literally true, that He brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

He represents heaven as a place where the development of His followers will attain to perfection, and all their present sufferings will receive ample compensation. This notion of "reward"* He introduces again and again, constraining His hearers to embrace His cause, with all its privations and disadvantages, because of the compensations which the future will bring. He does not even scruple to throw into the picture a dash of material felicity, speaking of the drinking of wine in the kingdom, while He adopts warmly the belief in a bodily resurrection. But the false colours of a Mohammedan paradise are altogether avoided. The children of the resurrection

* Not a few authors have been exercised about the frequent employment by Jesus of the notion of "reward," lest this should betray an appeal to an inferior level of motive. Even an entire book on the subject has been recently published. Jacoby (*Neutestamentliche Ethik*) discusses the difficulty with care, coming to the conclusion that Jesus, finding the idea prevalent in Jewish thought, made use of it, yet in such a way as to abolish it. "While Jesus employs the analogy of a work-engagement in which performance and reward correspond, yet He at the same time destroys the analogy by transforming the reward into a gift of love, which transcends the claims that can be raised by the worker"—p. 51. Perhaps, however, such apologists are unnecessarily anxious. Jesus regarded Himself as the Guide to the blessed life; and I am specially partial to the work of Titius, who treats the whole of the New Testament teaching, that of Jesus included, under the point of view of Blessedness—*Die neutestamentliche Lehre von der Seligkeit und ihre Bedeutung für die Gegenwart.*

will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels of God. The feature on which He expatiates with most frequency is the enjoyment of the company of the great and good of former ages. He will be there Himself, in glory, to welcome those who have confessed Him on earth into everlasting habitations; and God Himself—who constantly appears in the discourses of Jesus as the Father "who is in heaven"—will be there, as the Alpha and the Omega of all blessedness.

When, in the ancient world, the question was asked, What is the chief end of man or the highest good? the answer to it was practically unanimous—that it is happiness. "Since all knowledge and all purpose," says Aristotle, "aim at some good, what is the highest of all realisable goods? As to its name, I suppose, nearly all men are agreed, for the masses and the men of culture alike declare that it is happiness."* Against this, indeed, the Stoics in the ancient world protested; and some have protested in modern times —Carlyle, for example, who was never tired of pouring scorn on this idea. To him the motion, taken for granted, as he would have said, in every foolish brain, that anyone needs to be happy, or has any natural right to happiness, is the most colossal of all blunders. Men are miserable, he argued, because they entertain exorbitant notions of their own deserts, and they

* *Nicomachean Ethics*, i. 4.

are astonished when nature does not agree with them. But let them take it for granted that they deserve nothing, and then they will be delighted with the slightest enjoyments. "Fancy," says he, "thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot; fancy thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp."* At the time when such sentiments were expressed by the sardonic philosopher, there was good reason for them in the condition of philosophy and the tendencies of the public mind. But the desire for happiness is too deep-seated and truly natural to be argued away by any eloquence. Jesus, ever true to nature, acknowledged this as one of the primordial forces of our being, and endeavoured to enlist it among the motives of goodness. Only He employed the word "blessed" in the place of "happy"—a simple yet a radical change; for blessedness is a happiness pure and spiritual, reaching down to the profoundest elements of human nature and reaching forth to the illimitable developments of eternity.

* *Sartor Resartus*, ii. 9; *Past and Present*, iii. 4; and, indeed, his works *passim*.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Matt. iv. 17, 23; v. 3, 10, 19, 20; vi. 10, 33; vii. 21; viii. 11, 12; ix. 35, x. 7; xi. 11, 12; xii. 28; xiii. 11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 52; xvi. 19, 28; xviii. 1, 3, 4, 23; xix. 12, 14, 23, 24; xx. 1; xxi. 31, 43; xxii. 2; xxiii. 13; xxiv. 14; xxv. 1, 34; xxvi. 29.

Mark i. 14, 15; iv. 11, 26, 30; ix. 1, 47; x. 14, 15, 23, 24, 25; xii. 34; xiv. 25; xv. 43.

Luke iv. 43; vi. 20; vii. 28; viii. 1, 10; ix. 2, 11, 27, 60, 62; x. 9, 11; xi. 2, 17, 20; xii. 31, 32; xiii. 20, 28, 29; xiv. 15; xvi. 16; xvii. 20, 21; xviii. 16, 17, 24, 25, 29; xxi. 31; xxii. 16, 18, 29, 30; xxiii. 51.

Matt. v. 12; vi. 1, 4, 9, 10, 20; x. 41, 42; xiii. 30; xviii. 10; xix. 21, 28-30; xx. 23; xxii. 30-32; xxiv. 31; xxv. 21, 23, 46.

Mark viii. 35; ix. 41, 43, 45; x. 17-31; xii. 25.

Luke vi. 23; x. 20; xii. 33, 37; xiv. 14; xv. 7, 10; xvi. 9, 22; xviii. 22, 30; xx. 34-38; xxiii. 43.

CHAPTER III.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

IN the foregoing chapter attention was drawn to the fact that the blessedness promised in the Beatitudes is defined in the reason annexed to each of them and introduced by the conjunction "for." Of these reasons the first is in the words, "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and the eighth is in exactly the same words, as if, having sounded all the chords of happiness, the discourse had nothing left but to repeat the keynote. This is a remarkable confirmation of what has been already said about the prominence of "the kingdom of heaven" in the teaching of Jesus.*

This prominence may cause surprise for several reasons—first, because the phrase was not of His own invention. It was employed before Him by John the Baptist, one of the notes of whose message was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Even he, however, was not the originator. Those who dig in the literary remains of the period between the Old

* It remarkably confirms also what was said of the subordination of "the kingdom" to "the Gospel."

Testament and the New find it there; so that it was part of the religious language of the day, which Jesus, as a child of His time and country, inherited. This encourages us to inquire if it can be traced farther back in the Old Testament; and, when we search, we have not far to look; because in the Book of Daniel we read that the great world-kingdoms, which the prophet saw in vision, were to be superseded by what he expressly called "the kingdom of God"; and, in his famous prophecy of the Son of Man, it is written, "There shall be given unto Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom; and all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."* Indeed, when thus we embark on the Old Testament Scriptures, a vast field of inquiry opens out before us. We soon realise that the entire history of the people of God in that dispensation was founded on the conception of a kingdom of God. This was the ideal which had been given to the Hebrews by Moses, and their whole actual history had been a compromise between this vision and reality. When they first demanded a king, that they might be like the other nations, they were told that God was their king, and that they ought to desire no other. In the centuries that followed, the history of the monarchy in Israel was far from affording clear proof that the

* Daniel vii. 13-27.

compromise had been effectual. And, deep down in the heart of the more spiritual elements of the nation, the primeval idea lingered, receiving glowing expression in the writings of the prophets. At length the earthly monarchy perished, and the nation was led away into exile, but in the gloom of captivity the ancient hope shone out again. Although the earthly monarchy was lost, all was not lost. If only God would take to Himself His great power and reign, the glory of the future might far excel the past. The return from Babylon was a marvellous intervention of Providence, which showed that Jehovah had still in reserve for His people a future and a hope. The restored state, however, proved to be only a day of small things. This was not the kingdom of God of which the prophets had spoken and for which the pious had sighed. And, as the generations went on, things grew worse instead of better. The noble effort of the Maccabees was exhausted; Herod, an alien, was on the throne; and the Romans, with their irresistible force, were in the background. In all patriotic hearts smouldered the fires of discontent and indignation. Yet hope was not extinct. At length John the Baptist appeared, proclaiming not only that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, but that, after himself, was coming One the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose; and the question sent by John from the prison to Jesus, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for

another?" undoubtedly embodied the state of mind of many besides himself.

A second reason for surprise at the prominence of this phrase in the teaching of Christ is the fact that it was not destined to maintain this position in the teaching of Christianity. While it is very frequent in the Gospels, in the reports of Christ's own words, it is infrequent in the other books of the New Testament, and in some of these it does not appear at all. This has been quoted as evidence that the doctrine of Christianity is very different from that of Christ; but it may simply mean that new and perhaps more appropriate language had unconsciously been found for ideas essentially the same. The Apostolic Age was too much alive to be the slave of phraseology, even if this were the phraseology of its Master. When the apostles went forth into the heathen world, then practically conterminous with the Roman Empire, it is easy to understand that they could not speak much of a kingdom, because such language would have been interpreted as treason against Cæsar. "The kingdom" was an essentially Jewish idea; and, when the Jewish state had ceased to exist, the phrase was dropped as a matter of course. Since then attempts have from time to time been made to revive it. The Pietists, for example, of Germany, in the eighteenth century, loved to speak of work for the kingdom of God, instead of for the Church

or for Christianity ; and, strange to say, the bitterest opponents of Pietism, Ritschl and his followers, in the nineteenth century, have endeavoured to re-introduce it as the highest category of theology.* I have not observed whether in America this has commanded much assent ; but there are not wanting in Great Britain scholars who have signified their agreement. I question, however, whether "the kingdom of God" is likely again to come into general use as the name for Christianity. To the common ear it has a forced and foreign sound. Kings and kingdoms do not appeal to the modern as they did to the ancient mind, some of the most advanced modern nations being republican. Still, as having been the favourite term used by our Lord for His own cause, it will always have a certain attraction for the Christian mind ; and its use in two familiar sayings will always prevent it from becoming obsolete—the petition in the Lord's Prayer which makes us say, "Thy kingdom come," and the sacred word about the little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

But the reason which most of all makes it surprising that Jesus employed this term for the highest good is that it brought Him into conflict with the ideas

* Johannes Weiss (*Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, p. 67), while claiming that this phrase is the real watchword of modern theology, yet makes the acknowledgment that we understand it in a different sense from Jesus.

and expectations of His contemporaries and fellow-countrymen It might seem to have been in accommodation to these that He made use of the phrase; but it turned out that under this name they and He were thinking of entirely different things. The difference between them may perhaps be best expressed by saying that they and He laid the emphasis on different members of the phrase, they placing it on "the kingdom," He on "of God." It was of a kingdom they were thinking—that is, of emancipation from the Romans, of a palace and a court of their own, of influence and predominance among the nations—He, on the contrary, was thinking of a kingdom "of God"—that is, of God being more fully revealed, of the will of God being done on earth as it is done in heaven. None can read the Gospels attentively without sometimes pitying the Jews, because He was so different from the Messiah they were expecting; and the doubt may even insinuate itself into a sympathetic mind, whether He was justified in employing language about a kingdom of God which they, being what they were, could hardly help misunderstanding. The tragic difference of view was not reconciled. The nation was groaning under the chastisement of the Almighty, yet it did not repent; instead of responding to the spiritual appeals of Jesus, it remained earthly and ambitious. He was only a reproach to it. To practical and worldly minds He appeared a visionary;

and a great resentment and hatred invaded their hearts at the thought that such an one should presume to call himself their Messiah; for this seemed to them to be casting ridicule on a sublime and sacred idea. This dreamer would never be able to bring to them the prizes for which they were sighing, and it angered them that He should pretend to do so. Thus it was that the catastrophe was brought about, when the nation nailed Him to a tree.

The stronger, however, the reasons against the use of "the kingdom of God," as the usual name for the highest that Christ had brought to the world, the more certain is it that He must have had good reasons for making use of this term.

First, it connected His teaching with the tradition of the Old Testament and the past history of the people of God. Original and unique as Jesus is, He is never disconnected from the nation to which He belonged. His mind is saturated with the ideas of the Old Testament; His language is learned from its phraseology; the figures of the patriarchs and the pious kings occupy His imagination; and He knows Himself to be the successor and the heir of the prophets. If the kingdom of God was the underlying idea of the whole Old Testament history, this was the best reason for its being the most prominent watchword of His preaching

Secondly, He may have been influenced in adopting this phrase by the home in which He was

brought up. In the Jewish society of His time there was one section in which the tradition of the past was cherished in peculiar purity; its members are sometimes designated by the name of the *Prosdechomenoi*, which simply means that they were waiting for the kingdom of God. To this section belonged the home in which Jesus was born and brought up, as did that of John the Baptist; and, in the songs which emanated from this circle in the era of the Advent and have been preserved in the commencement of St. Luke's Gospel, we possess a vivid image of the hopes with which their minds were filled. These all centred in the kingdom of God. Those pious souls were pining and praying day and night over the degradation of their country, and watching for the dawn of a better age, to which they applied this name. In making use of this term Jesus is sometimes spoken of as accommodating Himself to the ideas of His time; but, in truth, He was employing language as native to Himself as were the syllables He prattled at His mother's knee.*

But, thirdly, the reason for the use of this name must be sought still deeper in His own consciousness. He knew Himself to be the Messiah of His people, under whose kingship the highest good of man was to be enjoyed. It is true, He kept back this acknowledgment for a time, at least in certain circles,

* Compare especially the angel Gabriel's words to Mary, Luke i. 32, 33.

mainly because of the contrast already spoken of between that which He intended by the name Messiah and the views entertained by His contemporaries; but, when His disciples at Cæsarea Philippi acknowledged Him to be the Christ, He made it perfectly manifest that He accepted the title; and, before the end came, He testified to the entire nation, by His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, what the claim was which He was making. It is difficult to avoid sometimes asking what would have happened if this claim had been conceded and the Jewish nation had heartily accepted Him as its Messiah. Would He have ascended the throne of the country and thence ruled the world? To such a question there is of course no answer; for the human mind is unequal to the task of saying what would have happened had things fallen out differently from their actual course. But surely we may say that the world missed an incomparable splendour when, instead of hailing Jesus of Nazareth as king of the Jews, the inhabitants of Jerusalem cried out, "Crucify Him."

As early as the Temptation in the Wilderness, as has been shown above, He had had to face the alternative of a vast external kingdom without interior reality and a small kingdom with genuine power; and He had—not, indeed, without a struggle, yet decisively and irrevocably—chosen the latter. The Jewish people adhered to their own conception of the kingdom of God, working it out till it issued

in His crucifixion; but no less resolutely did Jesus adhere to His own conception, working it out in the choice and training of His followers. Of these there were but twelve; and at His death the circle had only extended to five hundred; but these proved to be the nucleus of a kingdom destined to become worldwide; and in them His own conception of what the kingdom of God should be was actually fulfilled.

This is one aspect of the royalty of Jesus; but there is another still more significant. That which, from one point of view, was the hostile will of His infatuated fellow-countrymen was, from another, the will of Heaven, and Jesus accepted it as such. We cannot think of it but as a cruel disappointment to Him when the current of events bore Him away from the goal towards which He was striving; but, just because it was at the same time the current of Providence, it bore Him to a goal infinitely more desirable than that which He had missed. And so Jesus remains forever the supreme illustration of that faith in Providence which He recommended to others. Like one blind, He was led by a way which He knew not; but it was into a wealthy place. He missed being King of the Jews, in order that He might be the King of kings and the Lord of lords.*

* This development in the destinies of Jesus was to change all the thoughts of His disciples about Him and, consequently, to alter the nomenclature in which these were expressed; but, how far a similar transformation may have passed over His own

It is now, however, high time to be asking what are the permanent elements in the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God, and what message for ourselves it still contains; for, even if we do not think it necessary to adopt the language of Jesus, certainly the ideas and the spirit which He poured into this phrase are still of importance for us.

First, there are those who would say the chief lesson to be derived by us from this phrase is what it teaches about the social nature of Christianity—a kingdom being not of one, but of many, linked together in gradations of honour and mutual helpfulness. Jesus, they say, delivered mankind from an individual and selfish view of religion and introduced a religion of brotherhood and common endeavour. As, however, we have already seen, it would be truer to affirm that Jesus stripped religion of its national character and made it individual. Still, to say so would only be to state half the truth. The individuality which He teaches is at the same time universality; because a society into which every

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circle of ideas, as He entered step by step into the mystery of Providence, or how far this may have produced any change in the signification for His own mind of a phrase like "the kingdom of God," lies probably beyond the means of investigation supplied to us in the Gospels. We are, however, safe in affirming that "the kingdom of God" was, at all stages of His development, whatever these may have been, a comprehensive expression for all the blessings He was conscious of bringing either to the chosen people or to the human race.

individual can enter, without regard to age, station or race, is really universal, the only qualification consisting in that which is common to all men. Herein, then, consists the originality of Jesus: He stripped religion of its national and racial character, making it individual, in order that thereby it might be universal. The religion of Jesus Christ is, in the first place, a personal experience, a secret blessedness, a spiritual discovery, filling the soul with a joy which suffuses life with colour and warmth; and, then, in the second place, it is a glorious brotherhood and league of endeavour and victory.

Another idea which is kept fresh by this phrase is that of loyalty. Kings and kingdoms may not now, as has been already acknowledged, bulk as largely as they once did in the thoughts of men; but loyalty is an indispensable sentiment, the inspiration of all high endeavour. God is Himself the object of the loyalty of the subjects of the kingdom of God, as the very language implies; but the sentiment attaches itself also to Christ. Probably the fellow-countrymen of Jesus had not worked very fully out in their own minds what the relation to God of the Messiah they were expecting was to be; but this was, in fact, the most essential of all questions, as their own past history might have taught them. Why had all attempts to realise the kingdom of God in Israel failed? Had it not largely been because the earthly kings, who were His vicegerents, were not near

enough to Him? If there was a good king like David or Hezekiah, he was soon snatched away by death, and his successor might be an Ahab or a Manasseh. The prime desideratum for such a kingdom as they dreamed of was a King who should be more closely related to God and whose reign should endure forever. In Jesus this was fulfilled; and He appealed to the fact when He assigned as a sufficient reason for any labour or sacrifice which might be demanded from His followers, that it was done or borne for His sake. This is still the motive of service in His kingdom, and there is never a day that dawns but it proves sufficient to inspire acts of virtue and heroism eclipsing all Greek and Roman fame.

Perhaps, however, the most important idea in "the kingdom of God" is indicated by Jesus Himself, when, in the Lord's Prayer, He expounds the petition, "Thy kingdom come" by the one which follows, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Wherever, in a nation or a home or a heart, the will of God is done, there the kingdom of God exists; and this is something which never grows old. For the will of God Jesus had the most passionate love, into which entered all the feeling He had for His Father in heaven, as well as all the hope He cherished for the improvement of the world. When any human being did the will of God, Jesus said, "The same is My brother and sister and mother."

At the crisis of His passion in Gethsemane, the discords of His soul were resolved in the prayer, "Not My will, but Thine, be done." Where God's will is done, there may, for the moment, be suffering and renunciation, as there were in His own case, but ultimately there must be success and happiness; for the stars in their courses fight on behalf of the man who is doing the will of God, and all the winds of heaven waft him to his goal. By adding to the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth" the words, "as it is in heaven," Jesus reminded others of the fact, in the remembrance of which He habitually lived Himself, that heaven is not only a future state, but a present reality, to which those confused and pained by the wrongs and inequalities of this earthly life can look away and see a glorious image of the perfection towards which they aspire. This may be the reason also why He sometimes, according to the record of St. Matthew, called "the kingdom of God" "the kingdom of heaven." It may be, indeed, that Heaven in this phrase is only another name for God, as in the confession of the Prodigal Son, "I have sinned against Heaven," and some have considered it an indication that Jesus lived in the expectation that the kingdom would descend, in bodily shape, out of heaven—a suggestion entirely unworthy of Him—but the best sense is, that He knew there would be heaven upon earth if the will of God were done among the children of men.

So, we come, at the conclusion of our study of "the kingdom of God," to the same point to which we were brought by the study of "the Gospel." It expresses the secret of Jesus, the blessedness He had to infuse into human existence, and the goal towards which he was to conduct the history of mankind. In some respects it is a narrower conception than "the Gospel," being encumbered with local and temporary associations; but in others it is more expansive, suggesting multitude, authority and organization. It expresses the consciousness of One who has been familiar with an order widely different from the condition of this disordered world, but who knows Himself appointed to transmute man's abode of sin and misery into a holy and happy province of the Heavenly Father's empire.*

To some readers the treatment in this chapter of the most comprehensive phrase in the teaching of Jesus may be felt to be unsympathetic. In our

* There is considerable similarity between this chapter and a chapter entitled "The Messiah" in the author's *Christology of Jesus*; "the kingdom of God" being, in fact, an inevitable category in any work on the teaching of Jesus, whether dogmatic or ethical. I may be allowed to refer to the other volume for details as to the conflicts waged round this great phrase in recent years. To the books there cited may be added Wrede's *Das messianische Geheimniss in den Evangelien*, Holtzmann's *Das messianische Bewusstsein Jesu*, and Schweitzer's *Das Messianitäts- und Leidensgeheimniss*, together with the latter's work, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, especially chapter xix.

day "the kingdom of God" has certainly experienced a remarkable revival. To many it is the name for all they are able to imagine of the new heavens and the new earth. Though they may be members or even ministers of the Church, they feel less enthusiasm for the Church than for the Kingdom; because, while in their eyes the Church is only a means to an end, the Kingdom is the end itself. To others this is the master-word of modern theology In the Ritschlian system there are two poles—the one the love of God, in which the whole of history lies wrapped up, ready to unfold, like the flower from the bud; and the other this idea, which is the development in time and experience of all that is intended for the saints in the love of their Father. Even if it be conceded to be questionable whether, because this was the master-word of Jesus, it must, therefore, be the master-word of our thinking, still it may be contended that at least it should supply the principle of division for such an exhibition of His own teaching as is attempted in this volume, instead of one borrowed from philosophy. It would not be difficult to combine the two or to substitute for the titles adopted in this volume others redolent of the phraseology of Jesus. Thus, in place of the Highest Good, we might say the Blessings of the Kingdom; instead of Virtue, the Character of the Citizens; and, instead of Duty, the Laws of the Kingdom.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matt. iii. 15.
v. 6, 10, 20.
vi. 1, 33.
x. 41.
xiii. 17, 43, 49.
xxi. 32.
xxiii. 23, 28, 29, 35.
xxv. 37.
xxviii. 20.

Mark ii. 17.
vii. 8, 9.
xii. 31.

Luke v. 32.
vi. 20-49
xi. 42.
xiii. 6-9.

CHAPTER IV.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

IN a preceding chapter it was shown that the blessedness of each beatitude is to be sought in the reason annexed to it; and in the last chapter we saw that, both in the first beatitude and the eighth, the promise in the reason annexed is "the kingdom of heaven." I have already also adverted briefly to the promises thus made in several of the other beatitudes. But I passed over one such promise, not because of its being unimportant, but because it is so important as to demand consideration by itself. This is the beatitude which says, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled"; and it hardly requires to be pointed out that what they are to be filled with is righteousness. Thus is righteousness seen to be one of the elements of blessedness. But from the great Teacher it receives a much more marked distinction; for, after completing the Beatitudes, He returns to this one and makes righteousness the text of the ensuing discourse.

"Righteousness" was not, any more than "the

kingdom of God," a conception original to the Preacher. On the contrary, it is one of the most prominent ideas of the Old Testament; and the passion for righteousness, which He characterized by the phrase "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," may be called a peculiarly Hebrew instinct.

In the Old Testament righteousness is originally a legal idea. It supposes two parties at the judgment-seat, the one of whom is in the right and the other in the wrong; and the office of justice is to see that each of the two gets his own deserts. In human justice, of course, this is liable to many kinds of failure; but, whether the judge does justice by him or not, there must be one of the parties in the right; and to be in this position, whether recognised as such or not, is to be righteous. Of course, there is a higher tribunal than that of human justice, and every human being may, at all times, be conceived as ideally at the bar of God, where he will receive a sentence about the accuracy of which there can be no dispute; and he who at this bar might, either in regard to some particular action or in regard to the general tenor of his life, be entitled to a verdict in his favour is the righteous man. Thus righteousness is the favourable verdict of God; and it may imply also the practical justification ensuing from the decision of the heavenly Judge, when He makes the lot of the person whom He justifies correspond with the verdict. This consequence is made specially

prominent in the second half of Isaiah, where "righteousness" is employed in a sense not much different from "prosperity," or rather, perhaps, "salvation." Most people use righteousness as a term for the behaviour of man to man; and it includes this; but, when Christ speaks of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and of being filled with it, there can be little doubt that, in accordance with the usage of His race, the prize He has in view is the favourable verdict of God on a man's character and conduct.*

No better way of ascertaining what the hunger and thirst after righteousness means will be found than to study the state of St. Paul's feelings before he became a Christian. He had been trained in the Scriptures of his race, and in a godly home; and in his experience the total effect of the pre-Christian revelation may be said to have reached its culmination. To him righteousness appeared the

* Speaking of the New Testament usage of this term, Professor Stevens (*The Theology of the New Testament*) remarks: "In profane Greek, righteousness is chiefly a social virtue, usage and custom prescribing the standard of righteousness and measuring its elevation. But in the New Testament, righteousness is, above all things, a religious word; it is rightness according to the divine standard; it is conformity to the will and nature of God Himself." And Professor Skinner (*Commentary on Isaiah*, xl.-lxvi., Appendix II.), speaking of the Old Testament usage, says that, "when any person or act is spoken of as righteous, a religious reference is probably always included, the ideal tribunal being that of God."

be-all and the end-all of existence ; he felt he must die if he could not procure it ; and by righteousness he understood the favourable verdict of God on his life. Luther was brought, by the training of his early days, to exactly the same state of mind ; the thing he supremely desired was precisely the same—a favourable verdict of God on his character and conduct—and the flesh was eaten from his bones because he despaired of attaining it. While much can be said against Pharisaism, and much against Roman Catholicism, it was under Pharisaic auspices that Paul, and under Roman Catholic auspices that Luther, arrived at this conviction ; and it may be open to question whether Protestantism is everywhere training up the populations under its charge to realise as much as this in as poignant a way. But, if this is not done, the very foundations on which serious religion can be built are not being laid. In our Lord's beatitude the blessedness of being filled with righteousness is conditioned on hungering and thirsting after it.

The sympathy of Christ with the training imparted by the Old Testament, and with the passion for righteousness thereby generated, is expressed very distinctly in the Sermon on the Mount, before the Preacher proceeds to the exposition of His own ideal ; the motive underlying this declaration being a fear lest His subsequent references to the Old Testament should be understood as disparaging to its authority,

In order to avoid this danger, He prefaced His exposition with the statement: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for, verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." In our day this has been declared to be as extreme a misrepresentation of the mind of Christ as the annals of falsification contain; one critic remarking that it is just as credible that Jesus said this as it would be if a Romish book asserted that, after nailing his theses to the church-door, Luther had bought an indulgence. But the truth is, there are few sayings of our Lord more strongly authenticated by every internal sign; and it is only by putting on it a meaning which it does not bear, and which is contrary to the Preacher's obvious intention, that it is brought into antagonism with the general strain of His teaching. If it referred to the details of the ceremonial law, such as those about which St. Paul and the Judaizers contended, of course it would be outrageously in opposition not only to St. Paul but to Jesus Himself, as His mind is expounded in other portions of the Gospels. But to suppose this is quite unnecessary. Those who have been most in sympathy with Him have not misunderstood Him here, and they have not seen the necessity for any violent vindication of His consistency. By "the law" they have understood the education of the Old Testament

as a whole; and, when Christ says that He came not to destroy this, but to fulfil it, they have understood that He intended to honour the teachers of the dispensation preceding His own and to intimate that their work was not to be annulled by His, but, on the contrary, carried on to its completion. To the men of revelation in the Old Testament it was vouchsafed to make known the mind of God as to the type of character and conduct which He approved. All their doctrine on this subject Jesus accepts, sympathizing with it from the bottom of His heart. The tone of His references all through His ministry amply confirms this; for they are not only frequent, but full of affection and reverence, like the references of a son to the utterances of an honoured father. Christ accepted the education of the Old Testament in its entirety. I think we may go further and say, that He accepted all the ethical wisdom of the ancient world in so far as it may have been known to Him. The sages of Greece speculated not without success on the character and conduct pleasing to God; and they sketched, as has been already observed, in the four cardinal virtues the outlines of a noble manhood. Some have supposed that the reason why Jesus dwelt comparatively little on such masculine virtues, expatiating more frequently on the feminine graces of character, such as compassion and humility, may have been because the work in relation to the former had already been done by His predecessors. Perhaps

this implies an acquaintance with pagan thinkers such as we cannot attribute to the Man of Nazareth. But at any rate He adopted the wisdom of Moses and the prophets; not a ray of light cast by them on human life was to be lost; or, if lost, it was to be lost only in the same way in which the morning twilight is lost as it is absorbed in the perfect day.*

Whilst, however, thus incorporating with His own teaching all noble conceptions of human conduct and character already in the world, He went far beyond them. We cannot now read the finest efforts of pagan philosophy in this region without being astonished at the blots and the blanks by which they

* Compare Justin Martyr: "Not because the teachings of Plato are different from those of Christ, but because they are not in all respects similar, as neither are those of the others, Stoics and poets and historians. For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic Word, seeing what was related to it. But they who contradict themselves on the more important points appear not to have possessed the heavenly wisdom, and the knowledge which cannot be spoken against. Whatever things are rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians. For, next to God, we honour and love the Word, who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since also He became man for our sakes, that, becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing. For all the writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted Word, that was in them. For the seed and imitation imparted according to capacity is one thing, and quite another is the thing itself, of which there is the participation and imitation according to the grace which is from Him."—*Second Apology*, ch. xiii.

are disfigured. Even the circle about Socrates had no conception of the inviolable personal purity which is a commonplace to those who have been instructed by Jesus. In Cicero's delightful treatise on Old Age there are traits of selfishness, expressed with the utmost *naïveté*, which shock the moral sense of the least sensitive Christian. The truth is, as someone has observed, the pagan world not only never produced one holy man, but never even drew the picture of one. The Hebrew Scriptures soar infinitely higher; yet even they come far short of the level on which Jesus moves. It used to be considered a point of orthodoxy to maintain that, in ethical doctrine, Christ did not go beyond Moses. But it required a great deal of forcing to make this even plausible. In the Sermon on the Mount He Himself, when quoting what had been said "to them of old time," might have reasoned that Moses had been misunderstood, and that in His discourse He was to give the true meaning of the ancient lawgiver; but, instead of doing so, He gives the new precept as something of His own. In what He said about divorce—that Moses gave them his law on the subject on account of the hardness of their hearts—we obtain a hint of the true point of view. The morality of the Old Testament was divine; yet it was human, because modified by circumstances and in adaptation to the stage of development at which those stood to whom it was given. So there was room for a

new revelation of the divine mind and will; and this Jesus had come to make known to the world.

Having thus cleared the ground, the Great Teacher proceeds, in the Sermon on the Mount, to expound His conception of righteousness; and, in so doing, He adopts a method frequently resorted to by every expositor who knows his business: He contrasts the conception of the subject in His own mind with one already familiar to His hearers—"Except," says He, "your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." He proceeds to describe the righteousness of the scribes, as it was taught by them in their sermons in the synagogue, going over five points—their teaching as to the sixth, the seventh and the third commandments, as to the law of retaliation, and as to the love due to others—and in each case to set His new teaching over against theirs. This goes on to the end of the fifth chapter. At the beginning of the sixth He passes on to a still more piquant contrast, comparing his own conception of righteousness, not with the teaching of the scribes, but with the practice of the Pharisees. This new division opens thus—"Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them"—not "your alms before men," as our Bible most unfortunately says, obscuring the fact that He is still continuing the discussion of righteousness. Only in

the next verse is mention made of alms, as a specimen of righteousness; and, after it, there follow other two specimens, namely, prayer and fasting.

The positive result that comes out of this thorough and well-planned discussion is that Christian righteousness is to be marked by three characteristics—Inwardness, Secrecy and Naturalness.

1. *Inwardness.*

The righteousness of the scribes was external; that of Jesus is internal. Theirs was a righteousness of words and actions; His flows out from the innermost thoughts and feelings. Theirs was conventional—that is to say, it was intended for the eye of society—His was a righteousness of the conscience, having regard only to God.

Society has certain rules which its members must not transgress on pain of punishment. These punishments are of different degrees of severity. For some transgressions it goes to the extreme length of imprisonment or even death. Assaults on the person, forgeries, thefts, and other serious crimes are thus punished; and, accordingly, such acts are avoided by all who have any respect for themselves or the social system of which they are members. To the ordinary respectable citizen the mere thought of being locked up in prison is one of horror; and to a respectable family it appears an intolerable disgrace if anyone belonging to it thus brings himself within

the clutches of the law. But there are other offences which society, although not going the length of shutting those guilty of them away behind prison-bars, yet highly disapproves; and it finds means of making its disapproval felt. This it does by excluding those who commit them from its select circles. A woman, for example, who has broken the seventh commandment is not put in jail, but she is visited with an ostracism of extreme painfulness; and in circles that are not exacting on other points of morality a breach of honour is punished in a way that is keenly felt.

By methods such as these society knows how to protect itself against the evil dispositions of its members; and those who have been brought up within the circle of well-ordered social life stand in wholesome awe of the barriers on the other side of which grow the forbidden fruits of crime and vice. The force of public opinion is a strong providential check upon sin; for none can affect to despise fine and imprisonment; and to multitudes the loss of character is a terror hardly less formidable; because it means loss of position, of friendship, of everything that makes life worth living. Accordingly, by these motives the average man is kept straight. Nothing would induce him so to compromise himself as to come under the ban of the law or the censure of public opinion.

This is conventional goodness. It is of immense

benefit to society. And it is the utmost which the majority aim at. Their boast is that nobody has anything to say against them. Yet it is a very poor kind of righteousness. A man does not require to be very good to escape the clutches of the police; nor is it difficult to obtain from society a certificate of respectability, for its scrutiny does not go deep. Aware that it is able only to look on the outward appearance, society does not concern itself with motives. One man may be honest because honesty is the best policy, another because he scorns a lie; one may be sober because drunkenness interferes with business, another because even a single act of drunkenness is an infinite degradation; but society makes no distinction between these; all it inquires is whether a man is honest or sober—it takes no account of motives, feelings and thoughts.

Yet there is a vast difference between a man who is honest from policy and another who is so from principle; and it is on this inner world of feeling that the ethic of Jesus concentrates attention. With Christ the motive is everything; and sin is sin, though it may never escape outside the hidden world of the mind. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his neighbour without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that

whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart." A man may never commit the act of adultery, and yet his imagination may be a pandemonium of lust and passion; a man may not inflict on his neighbour any act of which the law will take cognisance, and yet he may cherish in his heart a great deal more hatred and rancour than has, many a time, gone to the commission of murder. A man may have learned the lesson of conventional propriety so well as never to make a single slip to which the finger of others can be pointed, and yet behind the curtain that hides his personality from the view of his fellow-creatures may be daily and hourly enacting itself a drama of ambition, envy and jealousy, of unholy desire, or of dark doubt and profanity, which he would not for the world allow any eye to see. God's eye, nevertheless, sees all; and these movements of the hidden man of the heart are sins no less than outward acts. This was the ethical revelation of Jesus.

2. Secrecy.

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was ostentatious; that recommended by Jesus courts the shade. When, in doing good, people are thinking of the eyes of the public and not of the eyes of God, it is but a step from the avoidance of that which would incur the world's censure to the pursuit of

that which will win the world's applause. And the praise of men can be won by goodness or the appearance of it. Indeed, there is nothing to which the world renders more handsome homage than to the appearance of extraordinary righteousness or sanctity. Of this tendency in human nature the Pharisees took advantage, affecting in their daily habits an exaggerated piety. In the sayings of our Lord are preserved imperishable pictures of their practices, by which they are pilloried in the eyes of the ages. We see them distributing their alms in the synagogues and the streets with a trumpet sounding before them; standing with uplifted faces and hands in public places engaged in prayer; going about on their fast-days with sad and disfigured countenances, that everyone may be aware of the sacred work in which they are engaged.

These pictures are to us now incredible, and, as we look at them, we seem to be reading about beings of a different species from ourselves. Not only, however, are they amply confirmed by the literature of the Jews themselves, but it is only the difficulty of seeing ourselves as others see us that prevents us from detecting parallel practices in our own religious life. In all probability these practices of the Pharisees had an excellent origin, being at first the overflowing of genuine zeal. In a time of persecution someone may have thought it his duty to pray in a public place in defiance of the law; in a time of famine

someone, melting with pity, may, to shame the selfishness of the rich, have given his alms away in the market-place. By the noble example others were stirred up to go and do likewise. By degrees that which had been the exception became the rule; and all who wished to come up to a certain standard had to follow suit. But the practice continued after the enthusiasm by which it had been generated had passed away; and it remained as a lying sign for feelings no longer in existence. Thus may the virtues of one generation be the vices of the next. To the contemporaries of Jesus these practices were only a theatrical mask, in which they were playing for the reward of popular admiration. And this is the very meaning of the name He applied to the Pharisees, when, as He often did, He called them "hypocrites"; the original significance of this word being nothing else than "play-actors."

This led Him to impose on His followers a strict law of secrecy. "Take heed," He said, "that ye do not your righteousness before men." "When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut thy door." "When thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast."

These precepts seem to be inconsistent with others which came from the same lips. In the Sermon on the Mount itself He says, "Let your light so

shine before men that they may see your good works"; and elsewhere He demands with extraordinary solemnity that all who believe in Him should confess Him before men. But this paradox is not difficult of solution. The public side of virtue must be balanced and kept in its right place by the private side. If a man's prayers in public are more numerous than his private devotions, he is in a bad way; but, if his testimony in public is accompanied with a hidden life of intercourse with God, it is likely to be salutary for all concerned. If a man never gives to the poor or to the cause of Christ except when his name is to appear in the newspapers or in a subscription-list, he is no better than the hypocrites of the time of our Lord; but, if a man's public charity be only the expression of a spirit of compassion and helpfulness, which he carries with him wherever he goes, then his example may fairly be allowed to be an encouragement to others, and he may even without danger enjoy the gratitude called forth by his generosity.

3. *Naturalness.*

The righteousness of the Pharisees was a manufactured article; Jesus desired a goodness which was a product of nature—a living flower, the beauty of which is organically connected with the root from which it springs. When goodness was supposed to

consist in fasting twice a week, in paying tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and in washing the hands before meals, it is easy to see that such practices were a mere garment, which could be put on or off at pleasure; but Jesus desiderated a morality in the blood and in the bone. "Either," says He, "make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt." "A good tree," He says in the Sermon on the Mount itself, "cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." No more characteristic saying ever issued from His lips. It comes to this, that he who would do good must be a good man; real goodness is not possible on easier terms. On the other hand, let anyone be evil at the core, and then, even against his will, his actions will be bad also.

The latter statement may seem to contradict what has been already said. The words and the deeds of the Pharisees, it may be argued, were good, and yet their hearts were corrupt. Jesus would not, however, have allowed that even their outward conduct was good. It imposed, it is true, on the multitude; but to the discerning and spiritual eye it was vulgar and counterfeit. He was not deceived by it; His disciples, learning from Him, detected it to be a sham; and even the multitude at last, under His teaching, found it out. Christ has communicated to His people an instinct for detecting spurious goodness:

as St. Paul says, "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." When a hypocrite, after a long course of duplicity, falls at length, and is exposed in the eyes of all, it will generally be found that the truly spiritual have not been deceived, though they have held their peace. As an uneducated man, when he attempts to make use of the language of the learned, is sure, by a misplaced accent or some similar nicety, to betray himself to those who know, so is the Pharisee detected by the saint. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

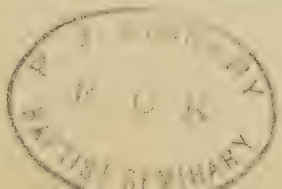
But neither, on the other hand, can a good tree bring forth evil fruit. If a man is genuine at the core, he does not need to try excessively to do right, and he does not require to assume a cloak to cover his defects. His character may be imperfect; it may be disfigured with exaggerations and deficiencies; its possessor may make many slips and false steps; but still his influence is wholesome, and those brought into contact with him feel that they are in touch with reality. This is the final solution of the contradiction between the law of secrecy, as expounded by Jesus, and the obligation, also enforced by Him, to shine before men. The goodness which is growing spontaneously from a natural root is safe from corruption even if exposed to publicity; because it is not showing off its beauty for effect, but displaying it because it cannot help it, as the

flower grows or the bird sings because it is its nature so to do.

In ethical systems the question has often been raised whether that is the superior virtue which is achieved by effort or that which is achieved with ease. The usual answer is, I think, that virtue is praiseworthy exactly in proportion to the effort required to bring it to pass.* But surely there must be a fundamental error in a line of argument which leads to a conclusion so unnatural. The strenuous virtue, which bears on its face the marks of the effort by which it has been attained, has its own merit, to which homage ought to be rendered; but the incomparable grace which we call the beauty of holiness belongs to the virtue which proceeds without effort from a nature good to the core. This conclusion, it is true, raises many questions: How is this perfect naturalness to be attained? is it, like physical beauty, the prerogative of a few favourites of fortune, or is it accessible to all? We shall come to this question by and by in the course of our study of the teaching of Jesus; but, in the meantime, I content myself with saying that the highest grace of the goodness He demands is its naturalness.

The exposition of the nature of righteousness by contrasting it with the teaching of the scribes and

* As is well known, this was the view of Kant.



the practice of the Pharisees, comes to an end about the middle of the Sermon on the Mount; and it is a question whether the argument is sustained after this point or whether the Speaker, having concluded the description of righteousness, diverges to other topics, passing from one to another without any very close connection. I am inclined to believe that at vi. 19 He still goes on describing the nature of righteousness, by contrasting it with what may be called the ordinary life of worldly men, who, living to eat and to drink, forget their origin and their destiny in the cares and pleasures of the world. This is confirmed by the great statement with which this section winds up: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." It is even possible that the dominant idea of righteousness can be traced right through the Sermon on the Mount to its close. This is, however, dubious; and I shall, therefore, break off here the account of righteousness, only remarking how utterly those are mistaken who labour under the belief that the Sermon on the Mount is a very simple and plain affair, containing a few kindly and homely rules, which commend themselves to the common sense of all and present no great difficulties to anyone who is disposed to live an honest life. It is not infrequent to hear people say that the Sermon on the Mount is enough for them, and that, in their opinion, the world would

be no loser if all other theology were forgotten ; such doctrines as the corruption of human nature, the inability of man to keep God's law, and the need of a Saviour, being inventions of theology and figments of the pulpit.

Jesus is conceived as a teacher genial and original, who, seeing mankind crushed under the burdens heaped upon them by priests and scribes, called His audience away from the legality of Pharisaism to an easier religion, telling them that God was not a tyrant or taskmaster, demanding a strict and scrupulous obedience, but a Father, who would take his erring child, just as he was, to His breast, and then accept from him such services as he might, without effort or anxiety, be able to render. Such shallow platitudes have not only misled a prejudiced mind here and there, but have even deceived whole generations of men. They rest, however, on an almost inconceivable misunderstanding of the words of Jesus. The reason why He revised the old law and the practice of His time was not because they were too strict, but because they were too lax. He sharpens the edge of every precept and enlarges the scope of every principle. There is an intensity in the Sermon on the Mount that is appalling ; it searches the conscience as with an electric ray. The Preacher demands a height of character and attainment never even dreamed of by Moses and the prophets. When

He says, "Ye are the salt of the earth," what does this imply about the moral condition of the mass of men? When He says, "Ye are the light of the world," what does this imply about the world? And how do Christians come to be in such a condition that they are to other human beings what salt is to corruption or light to darkness? It is mere stupidity to ignore such problems. These are the hidden foundations on which the whole structure of the teaching of Jesus is erected; and it is only by getting down to them, and forming some fair estimate of their magnitude, that we obtain any just conception of the mind of the Divine Teacher.

MISSING THE HIGHEST GOOD

Matt. vi. 25.
x. 28, 39.
xvi. 25, 26.

Mark viii. 35, 36, 37.
xi. 14.

Luke ix. 24, 25.
xv. 4, 8, 13.
xvii. 33.
xix. 10-27.

Matt. v. 22, 26, 29, 30.
vii. 2, 21, 23-27.
viii. 12.
x. 15, 28.
xi. 22, 24.
xii. 32, 36, 41, 42.
xiii. 30, 39, 42, 50.
xvi. 27.
xviii. 6, 8, 9, 14.
xxi. 44.
xxii. 13.
xxiii. 14, 15, 33.
xxiv. 51.
xxv. 30, 41, 46.
xxvi. 24.

Mark iii. 29.
vi. 11.
viii. 38.
ix. 42-50.
xii. 40.
xiv. 21.
xvi. 16.

Luke vi. 25, 49.
ix. 26.
x. 10-16.
xi. 31.
xii. 5, 9, 46, 58, 59.
xiii. 1-5, 6-9, 23-30.
xvi. 19-31.
xvii. 2.
xx. 18, 47.

CHAPTER V.

MISSING THE HIGHEST GOOD

HOWEVER the end of life may be conceived—whether as Blessedness, or as the Kingdom of God, or as Righteousness—one thing is indubitable in the entire teaching of Jesus—that He looks upon the end of life as capable of being missed, and as actually having been missed, by the children of men.* When He speaks of Blessedness, He at the same time utters woes, which will be the portion of some instead of blessedness; when He speaks of the Kingdom, He distinctly thinks of some who will not be able to enter into it; and when He speaks of Righteousness, He glances at many who are living in unrighteousness. In short, there is a considerable proportion of the words of Christ occupied with the description and the denunciation of sin.

This is the point at which the ethical teaching of Jesus differs most widely from the similar teaching of philosophy. The ethics of the philosophers bear a considerable resemblance to the teaching of Jesus

* A conception of sin which agrees closely with that expressed in both the Hebrew חטא and the Greek ἁμαρτάνω.

in so far as the setting up of an ideal of character and conduct is concerned; but little or nothing is said by philosophers about the inability of men to attain to the standard, or of the manifold forms of failure exhibited in actual experience. In English Moral Philosophy, especially, this ignoring of the facts of the case is painfully universal; and it imparts an air of unreality to the whole. This may be the reason why philosophy is spoken of, in common language, with distrust, and moralists are in but indifferent repute. For, though the common man may listen for a while to eloquent descriptions of an ideal life, and may look with aspiration towards the moral altitudes to which he is directed, yet he knows very well that his own moral life is a lamentable failure, and that the history of human nature is the same on a vastly larger scale; and he distrusts an account of his condition which says nothing about this painful fact. In spite of its tendency to self-satisfaction, humanity is aware of its own broken bones, and it knows that these must be dealt with before there is any prospect of climbing the heights of moral attainment.

While the sayings of Jesus abound with warnings, couched in many different forms of expression, that the end of life may be missed, there is not, in the entire catalogue of His words, one in which this is so impressively embodied as the saying which has arrested the attention of every generation: "What

shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

It so happens that, in the English translation, this possibility appears in three forms—it is represented as possible that a man may lose "himself," or lose his "life," or lose his "soul"; and, although this is accidental,* the circumstance may be taken advantage of, in order to bring out all sides of Christ's idea, as these three alternatives enable us to do.

The possibility that a man may lose "himself" is the possibility that he may never attain to the moral and spiritual stature for which he was designed, but be dwarfed into a nonentity. As a benevolent eye, looking on a group of children in a degraded neighbourhood, may see a vision of the rosy health which might have filled out their bloodless features and emaciated limbs, if they had been reared in a more favourable environment, so, we have reason to believe, from His own words, Jesus habitually saw with the mind's eye the spiritual development which those around Him might have attained had their desire been fixed more steadily on the true end of life.

What He thought of most frequently as impeding

* But, after writing the above, I found in Wellhausen the very same idea, of course without any reference to the English translation. Commenting on Mark viii. 35, he observes: "Für ψυχή gibt es kein ausreichendes Æquivalent; es steht zugleich Seele, Leben, und das Reflexiv (sich selbst)."

the growth of true manhood was the pursuit of wealth and property. Thus, when invited on a certain occasion to divide the property of two brothers, who had fallen out about their respective shares, He said to them sadly, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Then He proceeded to tell the story of the Rich Fool, finishing up with the statement, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, but is not rich towards God." In this final phrase—"rich towards God"—we have, it is clear, a very perfect description of Christ's ideal; and what it suggests is a development of the Godward side of human nature in prayer, aspiration, charity, generosity, and all the other qualities that go to the fashioning of a noble manhood. This was what Jesus desiderated for everyone; and to miss it, which was fatally possible, was, in His eyes, the greatest of calamities.*

But Jesus was hardly less sensible of the danger to which the poor were exposed of missing the prize

* Not only the loss of the self, but even injury to it—any avoidable restraint on its development or diminution of its powers—is deprecated in the strongest terms. This seems to be the force of the alternative in Luke ix. 25, ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἀπολέσας ἢ ζημιωθείς. The Authorised Version translates, "If he lose himself or be cast away," and the Revised, no better, "If he lose or forfeit his own self." Field, *Otium Norvicense*, seems to have been the first to detect the true force of the alternative: "If ἑαυτόν is to be taken in connexion with both verbs, we may

through an opposite cause—on account, not of the glamour of riches, but the pressure of poverty. Indeed, the commencement of His ministry among the fishermen and peasantry of Galilee is burdened with the pathos of this aspect of the condition of His hearers. It cut Him to the heart to see that His fellow-men and fellow-countrymen should be so stunted and undeveloped; and all for what? Slender was the livelihood, and attended by few pleasures, which they extracted from the grudging soil. Yet for this they were sacrificing themselves. They had no time to pray, to think, to cultivate spiritual beauty or dignity. This is the reflection that echoes through those matchless portions of the Sermon on the Mount in which He reminds them that their heavenly Father feeds the ravens and arrays the lilies in a glory beyond that of Solomon; and His logic is: You do not require to toil and moil so perpetually: you have time to improve your higher nature: even before the bread for your bodies and for the mouths of your children, you are to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. His was not a gospel of meat

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understand ἀπολέσας of a total, and ζημιωθεὶς of a partial loss: 'And lose, or receive damage in, his own self.'" This is expanded by Bruce, in his own racy, pithy style, in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*: "The idea expressed by the second participle seems to be, that, even though it does not come to absolute loss, yet if gaining the world involve damage to the self, the moral personality—taint, lowering of the tone, vulgarising of the soul—we lose much more than we gain."

and drink, of loaves and fishes, of better clothes and better houses; yet well did He know that all these things would follow in their own order: "All these things shall be added unto you." Let the spiritual nature be awakened, and the whole environment will be transformed as a matter of course.

In studying deeply the teaching of Jesus, it is often startling to note how He anticipated the ideas of modern times. This thought, for example, that the prime vocation of every man is to be himself—all that his Maker intended him to be, all that the original make of his faculties renders it possible for him to become—is one of the most potent conceptions of modern ethical speculation. The German poet and philosopher, Goethe, especially constituted himself its apostle, considering it, however, to be an original thought of his own. His watchword was Culture—a word which he has made a shibboleth among the educated of his countrymen—and by culture he meant nothing else than that which I have been expounding —that every man comes into the world capable of being, not a nonentity, but a man of a certain inward stature; and his primary duty, which eclipses all others, is to be this man. To this Goethe consecrated his own life, and he even sacrificed to it the lives of others; for he was of opinion that these had not lived in vain if they had contributed to his development. In our own country the same ideas have been circulated in the writings of Matthew Arnold,

George Eliot, and other disciples of Goethe; and culture is a shibboleth among us too. Between the moral teaching of such authors and that of Jesus there is a close resemblance. The difference will lie in the disparity between their ideal man and the figure indicated in such a phrase as that already quoted—"rich towards God"—or in the precept, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." To these modern moralists the measure of the man is intellect; to Jesus it was spiritual power.

A second sense in which the end of life may be missed is suggested by the translation of His famous warning with the word "life." And this also brings us right into the midst of many of the most characteristic thoughts of Jesus.

The most literal meaning of losing one's life is, of course, dying by accident; and there may be circumstances in which Christ's warning, so read, has a tragic significance: if a man loses his life by accident, what is the whole world to him? He is snatched away out of it; and all his toil and trouble, in winning for himself a footing and a place in it, are in vain. But it was something more characteristic that Jesus put into the phrase. Life is the opportunity of doing a life-work. Not only has the Creator appointed to every human being, in the constitution of his manhood, a certain stature to which he may and ought to attain; but He has appointed a corre-

sponding task for him to fulfil, determined by the providential circumstances in which he is placed. In fact, this is his life; and not to fulfil this God-appointed purpose of his existence is to lose his life—a calamity for which the gaining of the whole world would be no compensation.

This idea lay near to the heart of Jesus, first of all, in relation to Himself. He thoroughly realised, from first to last, that He had a work to do, so accurately arranged and fitted to the length of His life that every hour had its own part of the whole to clear off, and He was not allowed either to anticipate or lag behind. This consciousness is far more frequently, indeed, expressed in St. John, the Gospel of the interior life of our Lord, than in the Synoptists; but we have it in them too, as, for example, in His saying when Herod sent to threaten Him, "Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." It is expressed also in the utterance emitted on the last journey to Jerusalem, when He was going before the disciples in such a rapt state of mind that, as they followed, they were afraid: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." To everyone His saying at the age of twelve will occur as the motto of His whole

life, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business"; but this is one of the cases in which exegetic conscientiousness compels us to forego a tempting proof-text, because, in my opinion, its undoubted and only meaning is, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?"

In many different forms,* the variety of which betrays the hold they had on His mind, He gave expression to this danger in reference to others. It will be remembered how frequently He represented this life as a trust or stewardship, for which an account would have to be rendered by and by. The Author of man's existence is like a proprietor going on a journey to a far country, who gives to his servants their work to do in his absence and will, at his return, hold a strict reckoning with them all. He distributes to his servants so many pounds, and says, "Occupy till I come." On one occasion Jesus manifested extraordinary irritation, for which some have taken it upon themselves to censure Him, at the sight of a tree that was barren; but this was a manifestation of an impatience, which beset Him always, with objects that were not answering the end of their existence, and especially with human lives which were failing to yield to man and God

* Compare the logion attributed to Jesus, in St. Matthew's Gospel, Codex C, *Palestinian Syriac Library:* "And I say unto you, that men must give an account of every good word which they shall not speak."

the fruit which might have been expected from them. To this sentiment He gave expression in the solemn parable of the Fig-tree planted in a Vineyard, which, indeed, referred in the first place to the Jewish nation but has, at the same time, an application to the individual; for the principle is the same; and it is this, that, seeing the Creator never makes anything without a purpose, any created thing which fails in this respect is contemptible.*

To lose the "soul" is the third form in which the danger is threatened; and this is the form in which the solemn saying of our Lord is oftenest quoted. The meaning usually attached to it relates to the life to come—to the possibility of missing one's destiny there. In fixing on this as the sole reference of this phrase, Evangelism has omitted much of the thought of Christ, as has been shown in the preceding paragraphs, yet it cannot be denied that it has

* It may be thought that the word ψυχή, which is the one used when Jesus is speaking of the possibility of losing our life, is too slight to bear all the weight here put on it. But, if so, Jesus employs the other and much more significant term, ζωή (*e.g.* Luke xii. 15), for the end of life, substituting it now and then for other terms signifying man's chief end; and ζωή certainly includes all that I have put into the other term, and more. Ζωή is life potentiated with all that makes it worth living and filled with all that makes it valuable to God as well as to ourselves; and to miss such life is "death" in a sense equally profound, but recognised in all parts of Scripture, New Testament and Old alike.

emphasized what is the most appalling feature of the threatened danger. The loss of oneself in the sense already explained—of missing one's opportunities of moral and spiritual development, or of failing to accomplish the task which one has been born to accomplish—may end in the loss of the "soul" in the awful sense of being cast away forever.

On this solemn subject the teaching of our Lord is extraordinarily copious; indeed, it is to Him—and one might also say, to Him alone—that the popular conceptions about a Day of Judgment and the retributions of a future existence are due. Not only did He adopt these conceptions, but he allowed His imagination to play about them, till they were adorned with those realistic and pictorial touches which have made an ineffaceable impression on the mind of every age.

The idea of a general judgment must, one would suppose, have been a current one in the popular theology; because He refers to it as "that day," taking it for granted apparently that it was familiar to every hearer as the one day that mattered among all the days. At other times He gave to it its full title of "the day of judgment," or the abbreviated designation of the "judgment." The grandiose scene, which so captivated the fancy of the mediæval artists, is all His—the rending heavens and the glory in the clouds; the procession of angels from the open sky, with the Judge n the midst, shining with unspeakable

glory ; the terror, trembling, and loud wailing of the unprepared ; the angels moving hither and thither through the innumerable multitude and severing the wicked from among the just ; the judgment set and the presentation of everyone to be examined in the audience of all ; then, the separation into two great companies, on the right and the left ; the sentence of the blessed, pronounced in accents of divine welcome, and that on the lost, uttered in tones of angry thunder ; then, the passing away of the visible heavens and earth, as the one company depart to their doom, and the other, with Christ and the angels at their head, disappear through the everlasting gates into the place of felicity.

Of heaven there has been occasion to speak already ; but of the place of woe Jesus spoke still more frequently. Two representations seem to struggle with each other in His words. On the one hand, it is a furnace of fire, the Gehenna of fire ; on the other, it is a place of pitchy darkness, through which are heard, without interval or relief, sounds of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Only one more trait is needed to complete the terror of the picture : it is the abode of the devil and his angels, for whom it was prepared. The most detailed and graphic representation is in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus—if, indeed, that be a parable. The rich man is not only tormented in flame, so that he prays in agony for a drop of water to cool his

tongue, but his suffering and despair are increased tenfold by the sight of the felicity of the beggar, whom he had despised and neglected, now in Abraham's bosom.* Properly speaking, this is a representation of the condition of the lost before the judgment-day ; but there can be little risk in accepting it as true of the state of the same persons after that event.

Two ways have been suggested of escaping the apparent conclusions to be drawn from these words of the Saviour. The one is to suppose that He took over this portion of His teaching from the popular religion of His time † ; and the other that the whole is figurative.

There can be no doubt that, in some of its features, the representation of the other world in the teaching of Jesus can be matched with quotations from the apocryphal books belonging to the period between the Old Testament and the New. During that period the conceptions of the other world, which are very elementary in the Old Testament, had been maturing, the germs growing to developed doctrines. But the teaching of Jesus is far more rounded and self-consistent ; and it has every mark of originality. Jesus never gropes or hesitates, as all who had gone

* Reclining there, as St. John did on Jesus' bosom at the Last Supper. Lazarus is at a heavenly banquet.

† This assumption is made by Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus*, with great frequency.

before Him had done, when speaking on this subject: He speaks as one who has seen what he describes. Is it conceivable that this was a subject on which He could take over the ideas of the popular faith without making Himself responsible for them? If a religious teacher is responsible for anything, one would suppose it would be for such statements as these. It may be convenient to have a receptacle into which to cast any elements of the teaching of Jesus which may seem to be obnoxious, and so get rid of them; but, when exegesis, by such devices, deprives of all effect words which their Author obviously intended to impress and arrest, and which have, in point of fact, solemnised all generations which have read them with an open mind, it may be questioned whether it deserves the name of learning.

As for the words being figurative, there can be no reasonable doubt that they are in the highest degree figurative. And it is a sound canon of exegesis that parables ought not to be used as proof-texts.* This is, however, a rule which can be grossly abused. The idea that definite truth is never taught in figurative language is one which can only be maintained for a purpose. For all fair minds the drift of figurative language is frequently as unquestionable as that of the plainest prose. In the parable just quoted, for example, Abraham says to the rich man, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed;

* "*Theologia parabolica non est demonstrativa.*"

so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence"; and I should say that the doctrinal effect of this statement is as obvious as that of a mathematical proposition.*

On this problem of the endlessness of punishment, there are some words of Jesus which have been quoted in favour of the view that the fire of Gehenna is disciplinary, and that, when it has done its work, the prisoners of God will be led forth from it purified, and admitted to the fellowship of the blessed. Such, for example, is the following: "That servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes." This might mean that,

* Philippson, in his *Religion of Israel*, says: "The Rabbis do not believe in the eternity of future punishments; even the greatest sinners are punished only for generations. They express this figuratively by saying that between hell and paradise there is only the breadth of a couple of fingers; so that it is very easy for the penitent sinner to pass out of the one into the other." Similarly, as we learn from Eisenmenger, the distance between hell and heaven is, according to Johannan, only a wall, and, according to Acha, a palm; according to other Rabbis only a finger. In recent controversies such passages have been cited triumphantly as if they were weighty contributions to one of the sides; but is it not evident that, if such notions are older than Christ, His language in the parable is an express contradiction of them, and that, if His teaching is the elder, the rabbinic expressions were deliberately framed in contradiction of His?

after the few stripes are exhausted, the servant will be restored to his place in the house; but it may only indicate that there will be degrees of punishment, without saying anything about its duration. The parable of the Unmerciful Servant ends with the words, "His Lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him," which, it has been argued, contemplates a date, however distant, when the debt will all be liquidated. But, as the debt is put down in the parable as ten thousand talents—two million pounds—and the imprisoned servant is penniless, the encouragement afforded by this saying is but faint. There remains the well-known saying about the sin against the Holy Ghost: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This might mean that there is to be forgiveness of certain sins in the world to come; but, as it asserts that the sins of some persons at all events will not be forgiven even there, the real crux still remains.

On behalf of the other alternative to eternal punishment—that, namely, of conditional immortality—a much larger number of texts can be quoted from the sayings of Jesus the mere words of which might mean the total extinction of the wicked; because Jesus, in accordance with the general tenor of

Scripture, does speak of the wicked being destroyed, ground to powder, and the like. Such terms might mean extinction, but also they might not. For example, Jesus says, in one of His parables, "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder"; no image could more realistically express destruction; but what follows? "And appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The strong point of the theory of Conditional Immortality is the denial of natural immortality. I am not sure if there be any explicit statement of Jesus on this point; but one thing may be remarked: this view, if accepted, would bring man's natural dignity far down beneath the level of even the nobler heathen systems, whereas the whole tendency of the teaching of Jesus was to place it higher than it had ever been placed before. Does not the denial of natural immortality take the greatness out of such a saying as "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul"?

The truth on this solemn and mysterious subject seems to be as follows: Jesus frequently divide human history into two portions—"this æon" or world, and "that æon" or world. "This æon" is a time of probation, of opportunity, of change; but "that æon" appears in Christ's words as a vast level plain, stretching away on the farther side of the

judgment-day, on the surface of which, as far as the eye can reach, there is no change whatever. "Dispensation" would be a translation of "æon" corresponding exactly to the idea of Jesus. Now, He knows only the two dispensations—this one, extending to the judgment-day, and that one, extending beyond it. What belongs to the æon beyond the judgment-day is, in His vocabulary, emphatically termed everlasting or eternal *; and this term He applies to both the life of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked. If there is to be a third æon, supervening in a future yet more distant, the eye of Jesus did not see so far, or, if He saw, He did not speak; and it will be wise in us to follow His example.†

* αἰώνιον.

† My late beloved colleague, Principal Salmond, in his standard work, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, after a thorough examination of the whole teaching of Jesus as to His Return, the General Judgment, the Resurrection, the Intermediate State, the Final Destinies, sums up as follows on this particular point: "Christ's own teaching, we must conclude, gives the significance of finality to the moral decision of the present life. If there are possibilities of change, forgiveness, relaxation of penalty, or cessation of punishment in the future life, His words at least do not reveal them. He never softens the awful responsibilities of this life, even by the dim adumbration of such possibilities. His recorded sayings nowhere suggest the provision of ministries of grace, whether new or continued, in the after-existence. They nowhere speak of a place of repentance unto life in the other world. They nowhere open the prospect of remedial discipline in the disembodied state, or of terminable award in the condition which follows the great day. They bring the two events, death and judgment, into

On nearly every aspect of the teaching of Jesus there can be found among His words a *locus classicus*, to which it is the duty of an expositor to direct special attention; and on the subject of the present chapter there is one long passage wholly taken up with the thoughts just developed; where, also, they occur in the same order as has here been followed. In the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew there are three successive parables—the Ten Virgins, the Talents and the Last Judgment—in which we have three aspects of the divine estimate of human life. They

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relation, and give no disclosure of an intermediate state with untold potentialities of divine love and human surrender. They never traverse the principle that this life is the scene of opportunity, and this world the theatre of human fates" (p. 392). "Such," he concludes, "is the testimony which an unprejudiced exegesis has to offer" (p. 393); but he finally adds (p. 394): "Yet Christ's words are words of grace, and His doctrine is a revelation of life."

Strikingly similar are the words of another scholar: "Whatever God's hidden purpose of mercy may conceivably be, His revealed purpose is clear—He will judge men according to their works. The New Testament states no limitation to the doctrine of our probation. It remains a glorious if an awful truth The infinite gulf between right and wrong would be hidden if we ceased to think of the infinite contrast between heaven and the outer darkness."—Mackintosh's *Christian Ethics*. This is the latest among the books on Christian Ethics which, in the scarcity of large ones, to match the Continental works, our native theology can boast of, as being, though small in bulk, not smal in value. Amongst others may be mentioned Dr. Cameron Lees' *Life and Conduct*, Dr. W. L. Davidson's *Christian Ethics*, and Dr. Kilpatrick's *Christian Character*.

exhibit, at the same time, the three principles on which the grand assize will be conducted; for there is no point of view from which the divine method of estimating human life can be more clearly seen than the judgment-seat.

The parable of the Ten Virgins, in spite of its movement and variety, is intended to illustrate only a single point of truth—namely, that it is fatal to live in this life without preparation for the life to come. The want of oil is the centre round which all turns. Many opinions have been started as to what the oil is—Catholics maintaining it to stand for good works and Protestants for justification by faith—but it is more simple and general than any of these: it is merely this, that there must be preparation, the nature of the preparation being left for subsequent definition. This, as the teaching of Jesus, as well as the experience of every age, shows, is the standing mistake of the human race—to live as if they were to live here always, and forget the future and their own high destiny. In short, it is the tendency which, as has been shown in this chapter, Jesus tried to correct in the poor and the rich alike of His time—to miss being the men and women they might be, and to sink into nonentities. This rustic mistake is represented by making the delinquents young girls: they are the "foolish," not the wicked virgins; yet they are shut out. No excuse will be accepted for missing the end of existence.

In the parable of the Talents we have the most perfect expression of the danger of leaving undone the work of life. The man with one talent had not fulfilled his task. This is the only delinquency imputed to him. Indeed, Jesus piles up the points in his favour, as if for the very purpose of exciting sympathy on his behalf: he had only one talent; he did not squander it, as many do; his reason for not trading with it was the modest one that he distrusted his own capacities: in trade he might have lost his talent, but he brings it back safe to his master, who at any rate should be no loser through him. Nevertheless, with everything in his favour, except the one charge, that he had done nothing, the man with the one talent was cast into the outer darkness. Jesus insists on a positive morality, He will not be satisfied with negatives.

The third parable—that of the Last Judgment—is the most detailed description in existence of this magnificent spectacle; but the very point of the moral teaching of Jesus in it is frequently missed. When the wicked are accused of failing to feed the Judge when He was hungry, to clothe Him when He was naked, and to visit Him when He was in prison, they ask in astonishment when it was that they had failed to do any of these things. But their astonishment was only feigned; of course they were aware that the accusation was true? So, I believe, the scene is usually understood. But this is a mis-

take. The point is that they are genuinely and unaffectedly astonished. They are not aware that they have done what they are accused of, and they are virtuously indignant at being condemned for crimes they have never committed. Had it been one so distinguished as Jesus they were invited to succour, they would have been delighted to do so; but the cases they neglected were those of a few beggars, children, old women; and now Jesus says, "I was in everyone of these, and in them ye neglected Me." What a moralist! What a height and what a breadth in His commandment! While the question of Moral Philosophy is, What must we do? is it not evident that the question of Christian philosophy must be the far deeper one, What must we do to be saved?

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Matt. v. 21, 27, 33, 47; ix. 13; x. 6; xv. 24; xviii. 12-14, 17, 24; xxi. 31.
Mark ii. 14-17; iii. 28, 29; vii. 20-23.
Luke v. 27-32; vi. 32-34; vii. 36-50; xv. 11-32; xviii. 11; xix. 1-10; xxi. 34.

Matt. v. 20; vi. 1-18; ix. 4, 12, 13; xv. 3-9, 13, 14; xvi. 1-6; xxi. 28-32; xxii. 18; xxiii. 2-39.
Mark ii. 17; iii. 1-6, 22-30; vii. 1-13; viii. 11-15; xii. 1-44.
Luke v. 27-32; vi. 6-11; xi. 37-54; xii. 1; xiii. 10-17; xv. 25-32; xviii. 9-14; xx. 9-19, 23, 45-47.

Matt. vi. 19-24; xvi. 6, 11; xix. 21-26; xxi. 13.
Mark viii. 15; xi. 15-18, 27-33; xii. 18-27; xiv. 55-65.
Luke viii. 1-14; x. 31, 32; xii. 16-21; xiv. 15-24; xvii. 27, 28; xviii. 1-8; xix. 46; xx. 27-38.

Matt. v. 10-12, 13, 19-48; vi. 12, 13, 15; vii. 1, 11, 23; ix. 2, 12; x. 14, 16, 17, 22, 25, 33; xi. 16-19, 21-24; xii. 7, 30, 31-37, 39-45; xiii. 13, 15, 19, 25, 38, 41, 48; xiv. 31; xv. 18-20; xvi. 23; xvii. 12, 17, 23; xviii. 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 24; xx. 18, 19; xxiv. 12, 48, 49; xxv. 1-46; xxvi. 2, 21, 23, 28, 34, 45, 46.
Mark ii. 5; iii. 28, 29; iv. 12; vii. 21-23; viii. 33; ix. 12, 31; x. 19, 33, 34; xi. 26; xii. 3, 8, 10; xiii. 6, 13, 36; xiv. 18, 21, 30, 41.
Luke iv. 24; v. 18-26; vi. 27-35, 39-49; vii. 31-50; xi. 37-54; xii. 15; xiii. 1-5, 6-9, 27; xv. 13, 30, 32; xvii. 25; xviii. 32, 33; xxi. 8; xxii. 21, 22, 34, 40, 48, 52, 53.

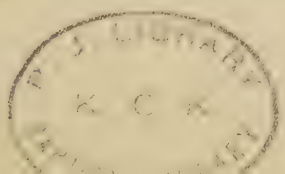
CHAPTER VI.

SIN

IN Palestine in the days of our Lord there were three notorious forms of sin, each of which lay like a burden on His spirit, till He relieved Himself in words. These may be denominated the Sin of the publican, the Sin of the Pharisee, and the Sin of the Sadducee.

The Sin of the Publican

In every country there is a lost class, the peculiarity of which is that it has given way to the appetites of the flesh to such a degree that its sin can no longer be concealed. What others do by stealth and in secret, if they do it at all, the members of this class do openly in public, either defying public opinion or being too destitute of self-control to be able to hide their weakness. In our own country, as is well known, there exists at present such a class of formidable dimensions, characterized by many designations, such as "the lapsed masses," "the submerged tenth," "the residuum," and so forth. Its members have fallen away from connection with



the Church and from the habits of respectable society; it is by them that the police are kept busy and the prisons full; and to them is due the difficulty of solving such a problem as the housing of the poor; but the principal mark of the whole class is that it is sodden through and through with strong drink. Such a class existed in Palestine in the time of our Lord, and it plays a prominent part in the Gospels, where those composing it appear under such designations as "publicans and sinners," "publicans and harlots," "the lost* sheep of the house of Israel." As this last name indicates, they were those who had broken through the fences of religion and social observance by which Jewish life was regulated and distinguished from the world at large, thus allowing themselves to become a reproach and a menace to all by whom these barriers were respected. So far had the publicans gone in defiance of traditional custom and national feeling as to sell themselves to the foreign power by which the country was held in servitude. They were, accordingly, looked upon as having forfeited their nationality and gone over to the pagans; and the very worst that could be said of any man was that he was "an heathen man and a publican."

The attitude of Jesus to this class was one of

* Connect this term "lost," which is extremely characteristic of the preaching of Jesus, with the word "lose," commented on in the foregoing chapter.

the most singular and characteristic features of His career and, when fully understood, reveals more clearly perhaps than any other circumstance the secret of His mission.

The respectable and religious classes of the land had no doubt what their attitude to the publicans and sinners ought to be. They frankly and heartily detested them, taking no pains to conceal their hostility. They treated them exactly as, in the physical world, they did leprosy, and they flattered themselves that they had good reason for so doing. Undoubtedly the members of this class, wherever it exists, are infected persons, who spread moral contagion. A harlot, for instance, is a menace to every respectable home. She lives by corrupting those of the opposite sex; and what else can be so utter an insult to her own sex as her trade? Such sinners are infinitely more dangerous than the small-pox or the cholera. And they ought to be made sensible of their degradation. Kindness shown to them is unkindness to others who are far more entitled to consideration. It is only by stigmatizing their course of life as it deserves that society is able to prevent others from adopting it.

Such was the theory of the religious classes, and it appeared to be supported by their religious books. In the Book of Proverbs, for example, one of the principal aims of which is to warn the young and inexperienced against evil company of every kind,

"the strange woman," as she is there called, is held up to especial reprobation and contempt. The prophets, in like manner, while launching their thunderbolts against every form of public iniquity, are specially severe on luxury and riot. John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets, attacked the public iniquity of the time in the plainest of terms, pointing out to each class of his hearers the besetting sins which must be given up. In all ages, indeed, this is the *rôle* of the prophet, as we see in such modern instances as Savonarola, Hugh Latimer and John Knox. In our own day many Christian ministers are roused to prophetic vehemence by drunkenness, pouring indignant floods of denunciation not only on the habits of the people, but on the traffic by which these are encouraged. With drunkenness they associate impurity and gambling, as a trinity of evil, against which the forces of Christian society ought to be embattled, as being both dishonouring in the highest degree to God and destructive to men.

It is remarkable, however, how little of His eloquence Jesus directed against such carnal and public sins. He has plenty of prophetic indignation, but it is reserved for sins of a wholly different cast. And towards the members of the class in which these open sins prevailed He manifested a surprising leniency, not to say partiality. The most striking single instance is that preserved in the Gospel of

St. John, although probably not recorded by the pen of the Fourth Evangelist, of the woman taken in adultery, over whom Jesus cast the shield of His protection, to the discomfiture of her accusers. But in the Synoptists we have the case of Zacchæus and the still more touching one of the Woman who was a Sinner. Matthew, the publican, is chosen to be an apostle; and Jesus attends a feast of publicans, given at his house. So unlike was the conduct of our Lord in this respect to that expected in His native country from a religious teacher, that it excited the most damaging suspicions and evoked the most cutting criticisms, although it is difficult to believe that His enemies were not consciously lying when they characterized Him as "a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Even the excess, however, of this accusation shows how inexplicable His conduct seemed to His contemporaries.

What is the explanation of it?

We may be certain that it was not due to any insensibility on His part to the wickedness of open and carnal sins. It is impossible to believe that one who loved God as He did could be indifferent to the high-handed breaking of the divine laws; and it is equally impossible to believe that one who loved man as He did could be tolerant of that which is so infectious and so deadly. It can be proved by quotation from His words, that He appealed to the

Ten Commandments, where such sins are forbidden, with an earnestness not less warm than that of the Baptist himself. Against at least one public sin prevalent in His native land He frequently turned the point of His invective—the practice of profane swearing—a sin treated by many in His day, as it is in our own, with levity, but which filled His soul, as might have been expected, with abhorrence. He has drawn at least one full-length picture of carnal sin, matchless in its fidelity. This is in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Never has the natural history of sin been so realistically depicted, from the intoxication of its opening to the misery and degradation of its closing stages. It is a scene from real life rather than a parable; for there is not a town in the world which cannot produce a story to match it; yet, all through, there is the suggestion that the visible fall is not the worst: the spendthrift loses his home, his father, his means, his health and his character; but the worst loss is that of his God and of his destiny.

Another thing of which we may be equally sure is that the leniency of Jesus to this class of sinners was not due to such an affinity with them as His enemies attributed to Him. Arguing from the proverbial belief that like draws to like, they affected to believe that His partiality for such society was due to sympathy with their ways of living. And this mode of interpreting His conduct has not yet died out of the

world. There are at the present day *littérateurs* of international renown who seek their heroes and heroines among the outcasts of society, whom they invest with all the virtues necessary to excite the admiration and affection of their readers. Thieves are depicted as miracles of generosity, and harlots as paragons of purity; and the narrative is so managed that the virtues atone for the imperfections, and the crimes are made to appear more misfortunes than faults. The heroes and heroines are the victims of circumstances, and society, which draws in its skirts as they pass by, is really more to blame than they. Not infrequently has the name of the Teacher of Galilee been invoked to legitimise such representations, it being taken for granted that He would have judged in the same way. But one essential point is missed by those who thus in our day patronise Jesus, as it was by those who criticized Him in His own—namely, that He invariably drew near to the outcasts for the purpose of reclaiming them. He went among them, as He said Himself, as the physician goes among the sick. Never was there a more unanswerable argument; for where ought a physician to be if not among the diseased? and, the more desperate the disease is, the more imperative is it that he should be there.* But the virtue of this argument depends entirely on the sup-

* Compare the logion attributed to Jesus by Ephraem Syrus: "But where the pains are, thither hasteneth the physician."

position that he is there to cure. Too often the modern writers of whom I have spoken flatter instead of curing, making light of sin and putting excuses in the mouths of those who practise it. But Jesus induced Zacchæus to disgorge his ill-gotten gains and commanded the woman taken in adultery to sin no more. The publicans and the sinners never received the impression that He had come to be one of themselves: they were perfectly well aware that He had come to win them from an evil life.

Yet there was in His behaviour a remarkable novelty; and, although the world has since then travelled far in His company—so far that the hostility of His contemporaries to His efforts on behalf of the fallen are now hardly intelligible—it is still far from comprehending His secret. The settled conviction of His contemporaries and predecessors was that, in dealing with carnal and open sinners, a religious teacher must attack their sins without mercy or circumlocution, pounding at them incessantly, condemning and exposing them. There is nothing else to be done, it was thought; and this is still the conviction, conscious or unconscious, of many earnest souls. But Jesus, while not less sensible than others of the magnitude and heinousness of such sins, recognised that these did not make up the whole history of those guilty of them. Conspicuous as their offences might be, towering aloft and inviting the lightning of prophetic denunciation, there was another side, less visible and

less easy of access but, when found, far more capable of being penetrated with the message of Heaven. Can anyone look at the Woman who was a Sinner, kneeling at the feet of the Saviour, the expression of her love so passionate and yet so restrained, without being convinced that, in spite of her awful past, there were in her composition elements of womanhood of the finest quality, waiting for disenthralment? In short, there is a conscience in man, even at his worst, and Jesus habitually made use of this as a lever to overturn the fabric of iniquity. It is by the good in everyone that the evil must be overcome. This was the secret of Jesus.

The *locus classicus*, in which we must seek the innermost thoughts of Jesus on this vital point, is the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke. The woman's piece of silver did not turn to copper or lead, when it was lost. In one sense its value was reduced to zero, because, for the time, it was of no use to its owner; and this is an image of the fact, no doubt intended to be suggested by the Preacher, that an impenitent sinner is throwing away thousands of opportunities of being useful to God and man. In like manner the Lost Sheep is an image of how such an one has forsaken his own mercies ; and the Prodigal Son of the misery, conscious or unconscious, of his condition. But, although mixed up with dust and dirt, the coin has not been changed to dust and dirt: on the contrary, the eye of the mind can see it shining where it lies, even before

it is discovered, as the imagination of the miner sees the diamond, condensed from secular pressures, sparkling below the quartz. And, in the same way, Jesus taught the world to divine behind the iniquities of the chief of sinners a possible son of God and heir of eternity.

So far, indeed, from becoming valueless through being lost, the coin thereby acquired an extraordinary value and interest in the mind of the owner. This fact is the salient point of all the three parables of the fifteenth of St. Luke. The Pharisees were acting on the supposition that those whom God had lost were forgotten or hated by Him; and they believed they were acting in accordance with His mind when they neglected or hated them too; but Jesus proved to them by a series of illustrations, which could easily have been multiplied—for the principle, once admitted, can be illustrated by a hundred instances—that the very fact of being lost lends to any object a new value in the eyes of its owner. The *desiderium* may increase till it is an all-absorbing agony, leading to the most persevering efforts to find that which has been lost. This is human nature. Jesus appealed to the world to confirm His reading of the human heart; and, in the depths of His own consciousness, He was certain that it is divine nature also; and so He ventured to announce it as the sentiment of Heaven—"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The Sin of the Pharisee

If Jesus displayed extraordinary tolerance to the sins of the publicans, He made up for it by His treatment of the sins of the Pharisees, His attacks on the latter being vehement—not to say violent—in the extreme. In the Sermon on the Mount He turned into ridicule their habits of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As time went on, He came into more and more direct collision with them, inflicting many a wound that could not but be bitterly resented, as in the parable of the Two Men who went up to the Temple to Pray. At length during the last week of His life, in the discourse preserved in the twenty-third of St. Matthew,* he threw every consideration aside, and, in tones ranging from the most biting sarcasm to holy indignation, He exposed His enemies to the contempt of the multitude. He advised His hearers to listen, indeed, to these holy men, because they sat in Moses' seat, but He entreated them not to imitate them; "For," said He, "they say and do not." Then He ridiculed their broad phylacteries and long prayers, and drew an irresistibly amusing picture of their struggle for the chief seats at feasts and their childish delight in titles of honour. What could have been more galling to religious teachers than to be told, "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven

* This is the *locus classicus*.

against men, for ye neither go in yourselves nor suffer them that are entering to go in"; or to those zealous in making converts to Judaism from other religions than to be told, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and, when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves"? He compared them to "whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." He overwhelmed them with a succession of Seven Woes, as if to indicate that, in His opinion, they had carried iniquity to the point of perfection.

There recently appeared an article on Jesus by a Jewish scholar of the most modern type, who spoke of Him with respect, commending His doctrine to the attention of his co-religionists; but, he added, the attacks on the scribes and Pharisees attributed to Him must undoubtedly be inventions of a later age and of inferior minds; because it is inconceivable that so good a man could have spoken so of other good men. Even among Christians there has sometimes been manifested a shrinking from this section of the words of the Master, as if He had gone over the score. Certainly these attacks are calculated to upset the image of Him in some minds, to which He appears too meek and mild to kindle into wrath and indignation under any circumstances. But of the authenticity of these portions of His preaching there can be no doubt; who, indeed, but Himself could have uttered

the discourse of the twenty-third of St. Matthew? * And those who love and honour Him need not be afraid to face the facts. Jesus was a prophet, and one of the principal aspects of the mission of the prophets was to stigmatize the sins of the people among whom they lived; and, if on this occasion His attitude was of more than prophetic severity, it is enough to remark, in vindication of His vehemence, that the sin He was denouncing was hypocrisy.

It has sometimes been suggested that the reason why Jesus attacked the sin of the publicans so little and that of the Pharisees so unmercifully was because the latter was a novelty in the world. In the former there was nothing new; the prophets of the Old Testament had sufficiently dealt with it already; the Son of God would not deign to expose those who confessed their own sin. But the sin of the Pharisees was a new development of the mystery of iniquity, and its wickedness was not understood: on the contrary, its practisers were able to masquerade in the garb of sanctity; and it became the new prophet to expose and stigmatize the new sin. This is the line taken by Mozley in the discourse on the Pharisees in his

* In literary form this discourse is not surpassed by any other utterance of Jesus. The feeling is strong, having obviously been accumulating for a lifetime, but it is perfectly controlled; and the swing of the rhetoric almost goes over into poetry. Only at v. 33 does the Speaker at last seem on the point of losing His self-control; but how quickly is this discord resolved in the pathos of v. 37!

University Sermons, in which we have a marvellous instance of what can be done, by depth of psychology and keenness of moral sensitiveness, to shed fresh light on a subject which may appear to have been long exhausted; for Mozley may almost be said to have discovered the Pharisee, so subtle and illuminative is his analysis. "It was a new development of evil in the world," says he, "when a class, socially and religiously respectable, was discovered to be corrupt at the root. Evil which produced evil, which issued in disorder and crime, was an old fact; but evil which was the parent of outward discipline and goodness was new. It was a new stroke of policy in evil, like a new principle in trade or economic science. It was a new revelation of the power and character of evil that it was not confined to its simple and primitive ways—its direct resistance to conscience—but that it had at its disposal a very subtle and intricate machinery for attaining what the simple methods could not reach. It was a revelation of human nature that it contained all this machinery, this duplicity of action and working of wheel within wheel. And it was fit—there was a special aptness in the task—that He who knew what was in man should arraign this new form of evil upon its appearance in the world and at once stamp upon it that ineffaceable stigma which it has never been able to erase. He who saw the imposture and exposed it knew that it must be exposed in no doubtful

terms, and that less severity would not have answered His purpose and left the mark which He designed."

The besetting sin of the Jewish race in earlier ages had been idolatry; it was against this that the wrath of all the prophets was directed. Nothing is more perplexing, as the Old Testament history is perused, than to observe how ineradicable was the tendency to apostatize from Jehovah. The student of the sacred narrative asks in astonishment how those who had known the true God could, century after century, fall away from Him to the worship of a golden calf or such monsters as Chemosh and Baal. The explanation usually offered is that ancient peoples, when defeated in battle, were liable to transfer their allegiance to the deities who were supposed to have given victory to their own votaries. But, while this may sometimes have contributed, the real reason was a different one: it was simply that the worship of idols made the strongest possible appeal to the worst side of human nature. The heathen temples and groves were the scenes of sensual orgies, in which the appetites of the natural man received stimulus and satisfaction to the full. It was this that made the proximity of the Canaanite cults so terrible a temptation to Israel, while it made everyone in Israel who had any regard for decency and purity their uncompromising enemy. Almost more surprising, however, than the lapses of Israel into idolatry during so many

centuries of its history are the suddenness and the completeness with which at a certain point in its history this tendency was overcome. By the exile in Babylon it was cured once for all, the nation returning to its own land not only with no disposition to follow after strange gods but with a fanatical zeal for the suppression of idolatry. Even when they had to succumb to the Roman sway, they would not permit the standards of the legions, which were decorated with symbols of idolatry, to be carried into their holy city, but were ready to offer their necks in thousands to the swords of the conquerors rather than admit such a profanation. This zeal had its principal seat in the Pharisaic party, the members of which were distinguished for patriotism.

The nation was like a man who, having sown his wild oats, turns over a new leaf and becomes a respectable member of society, marrying a wife, becoming the head of a family, and setting up as a zealous defender of Church and State. On such a man the transformation is great to outward seeming; for he has gone over to the side of law and order, and is zealous against transgressors. Yet, in reality, he may remain in all essential respects the very same man as before, because the motive of the change is purely selfish, and his heart may be totally destitute of that which is the essence of morality and religion. Conformity to the conventionalities is the price he pays for the comfortable position he occupies in society; and, the longer he enjoys the esteem of his

neighbours, the easier does it become to pay the tribute. But the superficiality of the change is proved by the ease with which, when from home and not under observation, he slips such habits as Sabbath-keeping and church-going, and by the zest with which, in confidential hours among old associates, he recalls the memories of his Bohemian days. In fact, he is the same man, only with a veneer of decency spread over the surface of his character. Such was the change which had passed over the Jewish people and was exhibited especially in the Pharisees. In some respect it was a change for the better; because, as it is better in any community to have law-abiding citizens than robbers and drunkards, so it is better that men should be zealots for the worship of the true God than remain worshippers of stocks and stones. But the motive of the change was a purely selfish one; there was in it nothing of either the love of God or the love of man. It had been discovered that religion could be made a means of personal display and aggrandisement. The unthinking multitude looked up to the Pharisees as holy men; and the Pharisees eagerly raked in this tribute of popular applause. "Religion," observes Mozley in the discourse already quoted, "is so much a part of our nature that even the pride of man cannot culminate to the full without it. Religion undoubtedly makes him a greater being; if, then, he grasps like a robber at the prize without the humbling

means, he does become the prouder for it. And then, in its turn, religion grovels in the dust."

It was not, however, only or even chiefly because it was new that Jesus attacked so bitterly the sin of the Pharisees. He must have considered it peculiarly malignant. Once He compared His own generation to a man out of whom a devil has been cast; whereupon the dispossessed demon goes through dry places, seeking rest and finding none; till at last he says, I will return to the place whence I came out: and, finding the house empty, swept and garnished, he takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and, entering in, he dwells there; "And," solemnly adds Jesus, "the last state is worse than the first." There can be little doubt about the interpretation of this parable as far as it was intended to apply to its immediate hearers. The demon by which Israel had been possessed in the days of the prophets was, as we have seen, idolatry; but, by means of the Exile, this evil spirit had been exorcised. Unfortunately, however, the reformation had been merely negative. The empty house had been swept and garnished; but the genuine spirits of religion and morality had never been heartily invited to come and abide in it. So, there was room for any occupants that might chance to be passing that way; and at last the sins of the mind—such as ambition and arrogance—entered the tenantless dwelling and took possession, in place of the sins of the flesh. Or

rather, I ought to say, in company with the sins of the flesh, for Jesus affirms that the original evil spirit came back along with the seven new ones; and in the Gospels there are too many indications that beneath the cloak of Pharisaism sensual sin was not infrequently concealed.* This must be the signification of our Lord's charge that the Pharisees made clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, when within these were full of extortion and excess. Mankind in all ages have instinctively felt that this kind of sin—sin which is concealed beneath a profession of virtue and religion—eats more deeply into the soul and produces more complete corruption than the worst kinds of open sin. Hence the annihilating force of the language of Jesus when He made the name of Pharisee a synonym for hypocrite.

It was in a more pathetic vein that He sometimes referred to another characteristic of the sin of the Pharisee in such sayings as this, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." There is hope for a sinner who knows that he is condemned, but of what use is even the Saviour of the world to one who is not aware of anything of which he requires to repent? "Hence," observes

* In the second chapter of Romans, after the terrible indictment of the Gentiles in the first chapter, St. Paul expressly brings this charge against the members of his own race—"And thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them which do such things, *and doest the same*, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

Mozley, "that great and conspicuous point of view in which the Pharisee always figures in the Gospel—namely, as incapable of repentance. Self-knowledge is the first condition of repentance, and he did not possess self-knowledge; and, therefore, it was said to him: 'The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you,' because the publicans and the harlots knew their guilt, and he did not. He had degraded conscience below the place which the heathen gave it. The heathen, at any rate, allowed it to protest. There is, indeed, nothing in all history more remarkable than the wild and fitful voice of the heathen conscience, which would suddenly wake up out of its trance, to pierce heaven with its cries, invoking divine vengeance upon some crime. The heathen conscience was an accuser, a tormentor; it brooded over men; it stung them; it haunted them in their dreams; they started out of their sleep with horror in their countenances, wanting to fly from it, and not knowing where to fly; while the more they fled away from it, the more its arrows pursued them, wandering over the wide earth, and seeking rest in vain. Or, if they tried to drown its voice in excitement or passion, it still watched its moment, and would be heard, poisoning their revelry, and awakening them to misery and despair. Compare with this wild, this dreadful, but still this great visitant from another world the Pharisaic conscience, pacified, domesticated, brought into harness—a tame

conscience, converted into a manageable and applauding companion, vulgarised, humiliated, and chained; with a potent sway over mint, anise and cummin, but no power over the heart—and what do we see but a dethroned conscience, deserted by every vestige of rank and dignity?"

St. Paul, himself a converted Pharisee, carefully distinguishes between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the mind in the life of sin, when he imparts this bit of autobiography: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* And elsewhere he draws the same distinction, when he exhorts, "Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."† The sins of the flesh are such as luxury, gluttony and sloth; the sins of the mind or the spirit are such as pride, ostentation and selfishness. The former are the sins of youth, the latter of age; the former are the sins of the savage, the latter of the civilised; the former are the sins of the publican, the latter of the Pharisee. The former strike the eye of every observer and invite the thunderbolts of every prophet; but the deepest thinkers on such subjects have recognised that the sins of the mind and the spirit send their roots far deeper and are infinitely more difficult to eradicate from the soul.

* Eph. ii. 3. † 2 Cor. vii. 1.

The Sin of the Sadducee

The Sadducees were the anti-Pharisaic party; whatever was championed by the one party was likely to be opposed by the other. Thus, whereas the Pharisees adhered to "the traditions of the elders," which they believed to have come down orally from Moses and to possess equal authority with those doctrines and precepts which had proceeded from the great legislator in writing, the Sadducees rejected these traditions *in toto*, adhering to the written Word alone, and especially to the Books of Moses. In this they were undoubtedly correct; but they went as far in the direction of believing too little as the Pharisees did in believing too much. Thus, the Gospel tells us, they denied the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels and spirits; or, as Josephus in *The Jewish War* expresses their opinions, they denied the immortality of the soul and the rewards and punishments of a future life, saying that the soul perishes with the body. They were the sceptical party; or, at least, their religious beliefs lacked warmth and conviction.

The weakness of the religious sentiment in them was partly the cause and partly the effect of another characteristic—perhaps the most marked of all—namely, worldliness. If the spiritual and eternal stirred them but faintly, all the more tenacious was the grasp they took of the concerns of the present

life. They were the aristocratic and ruling, but, at the same time, the priestly party, because, from the date of the return from the Babylonian Exile, the high-priestly office had been closely associated with political power, and the high-priestly families were the leaders of politics and society. Priests immersed in the affairs of the visible world and but faintly tinged with the hope or spirit of the world invisible, the professed ministers of which they are, have been no unusual phenomena in history; but rarely has the type been more perfectly exhibited than in the Sadducean party. Again and again would the religion of Jehovah have been sacrificed, and with it the national identity, if these sacred inheritances had, in critical moments, had no more zealous conservators; and, however severely we may judge the Pharisees, as they appear in the biography of Jesus, it cannot be denied that, in such times as those of Antiochus Epiphanes, they were the saviours of the religion of which we have become the heirs.

The Sadducees do not play anything like so important a part in the life of Christ as do the Pharisees. Jesus did not come nearly so much into contact or collision with them. Only at the very close of His career do we find them openly identified with the opposition to His influence and doctrine. On this occasion they may have been provoked into active hostility by His action in cleansing the temple;

for the temple was under the charge of the high-priests, who nearly all belonged to this party; and it was against their unholy gains that He was striking when He drove out of the sacred precincts the traffickers in sacrificial animals, who were in the employment of the high-priests, exclaiming: "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

It would be interesting to know whether, in the sayings of Jesus, we have received any picture of the Sadducee similar to that of the Pharisee in the parable of the Two Men who went up to the Temple to Pray. No such portrait exists to which the Author has expressly attached the name; but there exist more portraitures than one from the hand of the Master to which we can hardly be mistaken in affixing this label.

Such especially is the parable—if it be a parable—of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Dives, as he is often called, was clothed with purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, while Lazarus lay at his gate full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Exegetic ingenuity has pointed out that the parable does not state that Lazarus was fed from the crumbs, but only that he desired to be fed. To such wire-drawing, however, we will give no countenance. Jesus sketches Dives not unkindly. On the contrary, even in hell the miserable man is represented as anxious

about the fate of his five brethren. At this also, indeed, wire-drawing exegesis, terrified at discovering any trace of goodness in hell, has taken offence, and construed it as a trait of selfishness: he was afraid, it is insinuated, to meet his brethren in the place of woe, lest they should reproach him with bringing them thither. But neither with this will we have anything to do. Wherein, then, lay the guilt for which Dives was condemned to such an awful fate? Is it sinful to be clothed well and to dine well? Of course the answer is, that to Dives these things were the whole of life. He lived to dine and to wear sumptuous clothing, neither bestowing on the poor any generosity commensurate with his means nor remembering that he was an heir of eternity. Here, in fact, we have come again upon the tremendous moral principle, which occupies so prominent a place in the Ethic of Jesus, that not-doing may be as guilty as doing, and that the Judge will accept no excuse for a life not marked by usefulness up to the measure of its opportunities. It is evident, however, that the lesson would acquire additional piquancy if Dives could with certainty be identified with the Sadducee.

There is another of the parables between which and this one there is a close resemblance—namely, that of the Rich Fool. In regard to it also the question has been asked, wherein the man's fault lay. Is it a crime, when a farmer's barns are too small, to build greater, or even, when the harvest-home has

been unusually abundant, to eat, drink and be merry? In this case, however, Jesus has, in the closing sentences of the parable, made unmistakeable what His charge against the accused is. His mind and heart have been entirely absorbed in his property—the mere shell and husk of life—while for his soul and his eternity he has manifested no concern. To quote the very words of the Teacher, he has heaped up treasures for himself, but has not been rich towards God. This is precisely the spirit of the Sadducee—it is a perfect description of worldliness, the Sadducee's sin; but it is perhaps too common a case to have been consciously painted with an eye to a particular class.

There is, however, a third parable in which I should fancy it to be nearly indubitable that our Lord had a member of this party in His eye. This is the parable of the Unjust Judge and the Poor Widow. The Sadducees took a prominent part in the justiciary business of the country; and the cynicism of the official who neither feared God nor regarded man must have been the very mark of many a haughty member of this class, living in the provinces among people he despised, and far from the capital, for the society of which he pined. That which he could not be got to do, either for the fear of God or out of regard to man, he yet hastened to do merely to save himself from annoyance; and this is a thoroughly Sadducean trait. The Sadducee was a friend of

heathen culture and philosophy; he found refuge from the disagreeable insistence of business and the presence of disagreeable people in association with the wisdom of Plato and the eloquence of Cicero; and, in order to escape to these employments of his learned leisure, he was willing to decree anything. For him justice had no majesty and the misfortune of a widow no sacredness; the thing which did immeasurably matter was that his philosophic calm should not be ruffled. Such a figure, I should suppose, had been seen by Jesus in the course of His wanderings through the land; and it is ten to one that he was a Sadducee.

Whether these supposed references to Sadducees in the teaching of our Lord be actual or not, certain it is that the spirit of the Sadducees was opposite to His—more so, I should say, than the spirit of the Pharisees. Worldliness was the badge of this party. Now, worldliness stifles the very faculty of religion; and on a cold, cynical heart the appeals of religion fall like seed upon a rock. This was the spirit that, consciously or unconsciously, our Lord was attacking when, in the parable of the Sower, He spoke of the seed falling on rocky soil; and it was the same spirit that in another parable—that of the Excuses—rendered of no effect the invitations to the feast. The man who bought a piece of ground which he was going to visit, the man who had bought a yoke of oxen which he must needs go and prove, and the

man who had married a wife and therefore could not come were all samples of worldliness—that is, of the spirit to which the things that can be seen and touched are the realities which impress and inspire, but the objects of the spiritual and eternal world are shadows, to which one may decently bow and burn incense but which do not exercise any constraining influence over life and conduct.

There is one object on which the Sadducee in human nature casts itself by an inevitable instinct, and to which it clings with appalling tenacity. This is money. Money is the sign and symbol of all earthly possessions; it is earthly pleasure in a solid condition, only requiring to be melted to assume any of its more volatile and usable forms; and the pursuit of it easily becomes an absorbing passion even with those who have forgotten how to turn it into these equivalents.

On this subject the language of Jesus is astonishingly severe. He actually, at least as reported by one of the Evangelists,* said, "Blessed are ye poor,"

* St. Luke manifests a partiality for such sayings, which has caused him to be styled "the Socialist among the Evangelists." Thus, to him alone we are indebted for the parables of the Rich Fool, Dives and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the Publican, as well as the story of Zacchæus, the incident in which Jesus was asked to decide a question of inheritance, and the social deliverances in the preaching of the Baptist. To sayings of this sort, reported also by the other Evangelists, he gives an additional emphasis, as may be seen by comparing Matt. v. 22 with Luke vi. 30, 35; Mark vi. 8 with Luke ix. 3; Matt. xxii. 10

and, "Woe to you that are rich," as if He condemned wealth absolutely and prescribed poverty to all who should accept His doctrine. "Lay not up for yourselves," He cautioned His disciples, "treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for, where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also"—the last words

with Luke xiv. 21. The most striking instance is that, whereas St. Matthew reports Jesus as saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," St. Luke not only renders this as "Blessed are ye poor," but adds, "Woe unto you that are rich" (vi. 20, 24). The question is, whether, in such cases, the first and second Evangelists have toned down the original, which the third has preserved in its native freshness, or whether St. Luke has heightened the colouring for reasons of his own. Some have attributed his tendency to Pauline influence, but without considering sufficiently whether the influence of St. Paul would not have told the opposite way. Others have attributed it to a socialistic current which, it is said, can be traced in many quarters, heathen as well as Christian, in the century in which the New Testament literature came into existence. Of late there has been a disposition to attribute it to the use by St. Luke of a source which he must have found among the poor Jews at Jerusalem or in the surrounding neighbourhood to whom St. Paul brought alms from his Gentile converts; but it is not made very clear what should have caused St. Luke to be partial to information coming to him from such a quarter; though, of course, it may have been enough for him to be persuaded that it was according to fact, Jesus having actually uttered these sayings as they had been handed down. See a fairly good discussion of the question in Rogge, *Der irdische Besitz im N.T.*, pp. 10-18.

containing one of those great flashes of moral insight with which He was able ever and anon to light up His discourses. "It is easier," He said, "for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." So extraordinary is this saying that even His disciples, who, one would suppose, had little need to be afraid lest they should be excluded on account of their wealth, were alarmed and asked, "Who, then, can be saved?" But the harshest saying of all was to the young man who came asking, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me." Innumerable have been the attempts to prove the reasonableness of this demand, the majority of them assuming something exceptional, known to himself and Jesus, in the temperament and circumstances of the man; but, when all is said, it remains a hard saying.

Such sayings have been accepted literally by some who have undertaken to expound the mind of Jesus. So it was in the Ancient Church, when those at any rate who adopted the clerical career sold all that they had and distributed to the poor before entering upon office; in the Middle Ages, leaders like St. Francis of Assisi held up to thousands of enthusiasts the assumption of voluntary poverty as the true imitation of Christ; and in our own day a man like

Count Tolstoy still understands in this sense the mind and intention of the Saviour. Nihilists, who dogmatically affirm that private property is robbery, appeal to the Man of Nazareth as the first teacher of their principles; whereas, on the opposite side, it is made a charge against Him by the materialistic writers of the Continent, that He had no proper respect for property; and there are few objections to Christianity more effective with the bourgeoisie or even the proletariat. Strauss, in his last work of importance, *The Old and the New Faith*, played off this objection for all it was worth; and Rau, an adherent of the naturalistic school of Feuerbach and Moleschott, in a work recently published, entitled *The Ethic of Jesus*, takes it for granted that the monastic interpretation of this portion of the words of Jesus is the true one; and thus he has no difficulty in raising strong prejudice against the moral teaching of our Lord. There are historians who represent Jesus as having been a wandering mendicant, whose aim was to found a society in which there should be no social distinctions, because all found their happiness in freedom from care, this being secured by freedom from possessions.

But, although in a theoretical world the absence of possessions may be identical with freedom from care, it is not so in the actual world. Unless those who have no possessions of their own are clever enough to induce others to toil for them, their life must be

one of incessant anxiety, which is by no means favourable to religious absorption. Few are so exposed to temptation, or so little able to serve God with an undistracted mind, as persons in debt. While Jesus earnestly deprecated carefulness about such things as food and clothing, He nevertheless recognised these as things which all have need of, and He took it for granted that they must be sought, only urging that righteousness should be sought first. In parables like the Talents and the Pounds He manifested a high appreciation of all providential advantages such as are afforded by money and property for service to God and man; and in many parables He dwelt upon faithfulness to a trust, under a prince or a master, as a virtue of the very front rank. On nothing did He more frequently insist than that His followers should give alms to the poor. But it is obvious that those who habitually give to the poor must themselves have some means of acquiring the wherewithal with which to keep up the practice; and, if it be, as St. Paul has informed us, a maxim of Jesus that "it is more blessed to give than to receive,"* this is an acknowledgment that it is better to have than not to have; because it is those who have that give, and those who have not who receive. Besides giving to the poor, Jesus recommended giving to the house of God, and He could

* Quoted as a logion of Jesus in the speech to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx.

even defend lavish expenditure on objects which to narrow minds appeared destitute of utility, as in the case of Mary's box of ointment. It would not be too much to say that He took it for granted that His followers would be of the class able to give to the needy. He did not associate exclusively with poor people, but accepted without hesitation the hospitality of those able to entertain Him in handsome and festive fashion. It was against such an absorption in wealth as makes it the be-all and end-all of existence that He protested—against the habit of regarding it as the end instead of only as the means of life.

This is the essential distinction. Money is an enslaving power when it is valued and pursued for its own sake; but, when mind and heart stand above it, compelling it to subserve their chosen ends, then it may become one of the instrumentalities of the kingdom of God. The strongest statement of Jesus in this direction is perhaps the conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward: "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye die, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." As a whole this is probably the most difficult to interpret of all our Lord's parables, the main difficulty lying in the fact that it appears to hold up for imitation the shady behaviour of a bad man. But the single point on which the application turns is the necessity and the

reward of foresight. This is the same lesson as was taught in the parable of the Ten Virgins; but here Jesus gives to it the peculiar application that even money, the use of which is so often tainted, may in this world be expended in such ways as to yield a return in the world to come.

Those who represent Jesus as aiming at the creation of a society in which there should be no wealth, but all should enjoy happiness in universal poverty, may mean well, but they are really doing their best to dethrone Him from the imperial position He occupies as the Teacher of the world; for nothing is more certain than that mankind will not permanently listen to any master who ignores or despises the fruits of intelligence, industry and labour. Man knows himself to be endowed with powers of mind and body on the exercise and development of which his happiness and his dignity depend; the stamp which his labour is impressing on nature is gradually transforming the earth into a scene of order, fertility and beauty; and no authority, however high, will permanently convince him that this aim is an error or a sin. We could not even believe Jesus if He taught what is directly contradictory of our own experience and the primary dictates of our intelligence. But this I say only in order to repudiate the interpretations of those who would father upon Him unnatural and fantastic ideas which He never entertained.

While, however, we thus vindicate Jesus from the exaggerations of such interpreters as Tolstoy, it remains true that He saw in money a much more formidable enemy of the kingdom of God than we are apt to recognise it to be. The feuds occasioned between nation and nation by the lust for the soil of the globe; the disruption of friendship and domestic ties by disputes about inheritance; the murders and robberies perpetrated for the sake of gold; the hardening of the heart to all sympathy and generosity induced by the keenness of competition; the unrighteous and shameful occupations to which men will stoop if only there be money in them; the power of the pleasures which money can buy to drown the soul in animalism; the oblivion of all distant and divine things produced by the acquisition of property, —such phenomena of the life of man stood out before the mind of Jesus with a vividness of impression which we only realise at rare moments and soon forget. In His eyes wealth constituted a moral danger, which only constant vigilance could prevent from turning out a curse in the disguise of a blessing. Only the determination to be the master and not the slave of property, combined with the constant practice of liberality, could keep the heart free and unentangled.

On the other hand, Jesus did not dread poverty, as the world does. It may be a blessing in disguise. In seasons of outward loss and calamity the enduring

possessions of the soul grow large, luminous and attractive, and the slumbering instincts of the spiritual nature waken up to apprehend them. The poor are less liable than the rich to feel that one world is enough. Nothing seemed to Jesus so much to poison the existence of the children of men as a craven dread of the future. They think a lion is lurking round every turning of the road, and they darken the sunshine of to-day by borrowing trouble from to-morrow, as if there were no heavenly Father to whom the future is known. Men accumulate the apparatus of life instead of living, forgetful of the fact that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. In reality, however, the requirements of a human being are few, and they are not so difficult to find. Martha is troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. God would not have brought us into the world if there had not been a place for us at the universal table. It is a sunny world, if we will only stand in the sunshine, instead of skulking among the shadows. This is the essence of the Sermon on the Mount, and it is at the opposite pole from Sadduceeism.

Such, then, were the sins of the time of Christ—the sin of the publican, the sin of the Pharisee, the sin of the Sadducee—and the fact that we have had to dwell so long on this part of our subject, in order to exhaust all His mind upon it, shows how large a

place it held in His thoughts and in His teaching. It may be objected, however, that these were the sins of special classes, and that perhaps He did not attribute sinfulness to all men. But He says to all men who listen to Him, even when complimenting them on one of their good qualities, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children." The late Dr. Bruce protested against such an *obiter dictum* being used to carry a great dogmatic consequence; but it seems to me that it is the very casualness of the saying that imparts to it such terrible force: it is as if He said, "Of course ye are evil, and ye know it; it requires no proof." And what a glance it is into the heart of man when He says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The sins of individuals and of classes are only the outcropping above the surface of a solidarity of evil beneath the surface, which is the property of the race as a whole.

Jesus would appear, however, to have looked upon His own age and His own countrymen as peculiarly wicked. Against His own generation He directed a force and a reiteration of invective that are without a parallel. "This," He said, "is an evil generation." He went so far as to call it "a generation of vipers." Again and again He denounced it as "a wicked and adulterous generation," the latter adjective being, in accordance with the usage of the Old Testament,

employed in the sense of "idolatrous," seeing that idolatry was unfaithfulness on the part of the nation to Jehovah, its husband; so that the entire phrase means morally and spiritually depraved. The Jewish nation He compared to a fig-tree planted in a vineyard—that is, favoured with unusual privileges, and cultivated with unusual care—yet from year to year yielding nothing—a useless log, cumbering the ground.

Would inquiry show that the race of which He was a child was more wicked than the other races of the human species, and that the age in which He lived was worse than those that had preceded or that have come after it? or are these the stock complaints of every prophet in every age? A very short time after He left the earth, and before His century ended, the nation of the Jews was turned inside out and its seamy side exposed to the eyes of history. In the annals of mankind there have been few such testing experiences as the siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 of the Christian era; and never has all which such a test has revealed of that which is in man been more mercilessly put on paper than in *The Jewish War* of Josephus. Perhaps this author is not altogether to be trusted, because he was a turncoat; but he alleges that such was the iniquity of the Holy City before it was besieged by Titus that, had it not been destroyed by the Romans, the earth must have opened to swallow it up; and, in spite of the pity extorted by

his narrative, the impression produced by it as a whole is one of such demoniac passion and violence that the reader acquiesces in the judgment of Providence by which such a nest of iniquity was removed from the earth.

When the best is corrupted, says the proverb, it becomes the worst; and this principle may be the explanation of the degeneration of Israel. There is no sin so guilty as sin against light; and Israel had enjoyed divine light beyond all the nations of the ancient world. The results had not, however, been such as the Giver of the light was entitled to expect. Age after age those sent by Him to enlighten their fellow-countrymen had been despised and rejected. Jerusalem was the city which slew the prophets. The Jews were like husbandmen left in charge of a vineyard who, when the owner at the vintage sent to ask for his own, beat one messenger and stoned another, and were only acting in character when at last they slew his son. And this conduct, Jesus predicted, would prevail in the future as it had done in the past: "Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city." Again and again He had to forewarn His followers and apostles of the treatment they were to expect: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep into the midst of wolves . . . they will deliver you up to the councils,

and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles." The latter words show that this persecuting violence was not to be confined to Jews, but manifested by heathens as well. In any case its prevalence is one of the worst features of history, and one of the most damning facts against human nature. In the words of Jesus humanity never appears to less advantage than when its hostility to goodness is being spoken of.

Of course the culminating illustration of this was in the conduct of the Jews, and of mankind as represented by the Jews, toward Christ Himself. In Him had the perfect goodness visited the earth, but its presence served only to irritate the wickedness and to bring out its uttermost malignity. He had brought to His own generation privileges such as no preceding age and no other race had ever enjoyed; yet, through misuse, these had all turned to condemnation; so that, as He told them, the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba would rise up in judgment with the men of His generation and would condemn them; because they had made use of their privileges, and these had not. Even for Sodom and Gomorrah it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment than for the towns, like Bethsaida and Capernaum, in the streets of which His messages had been delivered and His signs wrought. This is a principle which

must always be illustrated by the religion of Jesus, to whatever quarter of the world it may travel: it hardens the hearts which it does not melt, and sinks into deeper condemnation those who do not through it attain to righteousness; for there can be no greater guilt than the rejection of the Son of God.

In spite, however, of the vast extent of the sayings of our Lord about sin and their solemn character, He never allowed Himself to speak in the wholesale and exasperating way about the sinfulness of human nature in which theology, both scientific and popular, has too often indulged. He never spoke as if all bad people were equally bad, or all good people equally good. On both sides there are degrees of development and shades of difference. When the seed of the Word is sown, it falls upon various sorts of ground, some more and some less congenial, and one kind He does not hesitate to describe as "an honest and good heart." On the other hand, when the seed of goodness begins to grow, it produces in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundredfold. In ordinary human nature He recognised both bad and good qualities, when, in words already quoted, He said to parents, "Ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children." "Evil" they are, even the best of them—and this seems to describe what is most fundamental—yet they are disposed and able to give good gifts to their children; and

here His finger is laid, with His accustomed certainty, on the very point; because, if there survive in human nature any vestiges of primitive innocence, these are nowhere so unmistakeable as in domestic affection. It may be urged by theology that even the best acts of human beings, such as those prompted by love to their offspring, must be condemned at least for imperfection, or that "an honest and good heart" owes its goodness to the prevenient grace of God; but such refinements are not in the manner of Jesus, who looks broadly at the facts of life and never allows the acknowledgment of things as they are to be stifled on His lips by the recollection of any small dogmatic formula. Profound as is His sense of the wickedness of the world and the lostness of the individual, the ground-tone of His preaching is not despair, but hope; and the final and enduring impression left on the mind by the prolonged and sympathetic study of all His words is, that even in the meanest and the worst of the children of men there is an essence of divine dignity and immeasurable value, which it is the task of the Saviour and of all who are inspired with His aims to rescue from the dangers to which it is exposed and to redeem to a destiny of blessedness and immortality.

PART SECOND

VIRTUE

REPENTANCE

Matt. iv. 17.
vii. 13, 14.
ix. 13.
xi. 21, 28.
xii. 41.
xviii. 3.
xxi. 29, 32.

Mark i. 15.
ii. 17.
iv. 12.
vi. 12.
x. 15.

Luke v. 32.
x. 13.
xi. 32.
xiii. 3, 5, 24.
xv. 7, 10, 11-32.
xvi. 30, 31.
xvii. 3, 4.
xxii. 32.
xxiv. 47.

CHAPTER VII.

REPENTANCE

IN the foregoing chapters our Lord's view of the Highest Good has been presented positively by exhibiting His teaching on Blessedness, the Kingdom of God and Righteousness, and negatively by setting forth His teaching on Sin. Even to be able to sin involves the possession of a nature far different from that of the beasts that perish; and the tragedy of human sin reveals, by contrast, the height of man's original destiny.

We now go on to that part of experience which the ancients designated by the term Virtue, but which modern thinkers would call the Formation of Character. In Aristotle, as we saw in the Introduction, the way to acquire virtue is practice. To do right may be difficult at first; but every attempt makes it easier; every victory over temptation strengthens the virtuous habit; and by degrees that which was at first disagreeable becomes pleasant and exhilarating. That there is profound truth in this is not denied by Christianity; on the contrary, this doctrine of the philosopher is adopted in many

a saying of Holy Writ. But this is not the whole truth contained in the teaching of Jesus at this point or even the most characteristic part of it. Here Jesus takes a way of His own and differs widely from the philosophers. We have seen already that He differs from them on the subject of sin, dwelling on it far more than they, taking a more serious view of its nature and consequences, and regarding man as a being whom it is vain to help without recognising the depth of his fall. In short, Jesus begins with the ethical subject much lower down than the philosophers. We shall see, as we proceed, that He also raises him far higher, before He is done with him. Hence the road is longer, and it is more complex and far more original. We are here, indeed, entering on the most peculiar portion of the ethical teaching of Jesus, in which comes to light much of the genius of the Christian system. While there is in Christianity an optimism that soars far above the highest aim of philosophy, there is in it, at the same time, a pessimism far deeper than any found in philosophy, and the heights are not attainable without sounding the depths.*

It was probably from the peculiar series of experi-

* "Es ist immer ein Massstab für den Ernst der sittlichen Forderung und ein Beweis, dass sie zu neuem Siegesgang aufruft, wenn die Losungsworte Wiedergeburt, Bekehrung hellen Klang geben."—Haering, *Das christliche Leben*, p. 206.

ences by which man rises from the depths of sin to the heights of virtue that Christianity received the first name which it ever bore, when it was called the Way, as it frequently is in the Book of Acts.* Not only are such experiences unknown to philosophy, but they have often been strangely neglected by theology. In the traditional practice of theological science learned labour expended on themes belonging to the periphery of Christianity, where theology marches with science or philosophy, has been far more secure of recognition from the principalities and powers than study of those experiences in which the very essence of religion consists. Nevertheless the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and, in general, the class which, in the days of His flesh, heard Jesus gladly has made no mistake in the books which it has taken to its heart and has continued to read from century to century. At length in our day the estimates of the learned world appear to be changing, and it looks as if it were to be acknowledged

* ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 22, with a capital letter in Revised Version. No doubt there is a connection also with the saying of our Lord, "I am the Way." More doubtful is a connection with *The Two Ways*, a kind of *vade-mecum* for catechumens, incorporated in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* and, as the researches of Seeberg have shown, much used in primitive times; for this production is rather devoid of the element referred to, and it is not impossible that it may have been of Jewish origin.

that the learning which best deserves the name of theology is that which investigates what is most characteristic of Christianity. The great work of von Frank on *Christian Certainty* has produced an ample literature, which is still growing, and the recent work of Professor James has so stirred the spirits that, all over the Christian world, scholars are directing their inquiries towards the region opened up by James's great countryman, Jonathan Edwards, in his treatise on the Religious Affections. It is a good sign when the strongest current of theology flows in a channel dug for it by personal experience.*

* As welcome signs of such a change, I directed attention in *The Expository Times* recently to two books of Professor Henri Bois, of Montauban—*Le Réveil au Pays de Galles* and *Quelques Réflexions sur la Psychologie des Réveils*; also to James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* and Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*. *Der Begriff der Bekehrung*, by Johannes Herzog, is a contribution to the same subject from the Ritschlian School. And, since the note referred to was written, there have appeared Vorbrodt, *Zur religiösen Psychologie*; Schmidt, *Die verschiedenen Typen religiöser Erfahrung und die Psychologie*; and Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*. Among the works called forth by von Frank's *System der christlichen Gewissheit* may be mentioned Köstlin, *Die Begründung unserer sittlich-religiösen Überzeugung*, which contains a valuable review of preceding literature; Wendt, *Der Erfahrungsbeweis für die Wahrheit des Christenthums*; Schwarze, *Neue Grundlegung der Lehre von der christlichen Gewissheit*; and Ihmels, *Die christliche Gewissheit, ihr letzter Grund und Entstehung*. At the same time may be recalled two older books of sterling value: Dale, *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, and Stearns, *The Evidence of Christian Experience*.

The first step in the upward path which we have, therefore, now to describe is Repentance.

Repentance had been the watchword of the forerunner of Christ, who preached "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Indeed, it might be called the watchword of all the prophets; for these had all been sent, in the words of Isaiah, "to show the house of Jacob their sins." But our Lord had Himself to sound the same note. In Matt. iv. 17 the commencement of His ministry is described in these terms: "From that time began Jesus to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; where repentance is set forth as the very first word in His ministry. And in St. Mark's account of the sending forth of the Twelve, to do in their humbler way the same work as their Master, this is what is said: "They went out and preached that men should repent," as if this had been the sum and substance of the Gospel.

And repentance, if understood in its full Scriptural sense, is the sum and substance of the Gospel. It will be remembered that it formed an epoch in the experience of Luther when he discovered, on examining the Greek Testament, that the Greek word for repentance means literally a change of mind.* In the practice of the Roman Church and in the preaching to which he listened in his boyhood, *pœnitentia*, the Latin equivalent, was used indis-

* Μετάνοια.

criminately for repentance and penance; so that in his mind repentance was identified with the whole round of penitential practices prescribed by the Church. Hence it was a great new light to him when he discovered that the repentance of the Bible is a change of heart. In our own religious vocabulary the word is too much identified with contrition, the shame and pain due to a sense of guilt. Though it includes these sentiments, its true meaning is much wider. The word "conversion" would more accurately express all that is included; and it is not surprising that, in the words of our Lord, this term is sometimes used in the same sense, as in the well-known saying, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of God."

As the penetration of Luther discovered, repentance signifies a change of mind; but this is not so much in the sense that our thoughts about religion are altered as in the sense that the mind is turned to religion from other objects. What is wrong with men is that their thoughts and feelings are absorbed in the wrong objects, the enthusiasm and force of the soul being expended on things that are not worthy of the devotion of such a being as man; and what is required is that the mind should be diverted from such questions as, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? and, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? to the thoughts connected with man's

lofty origin and immortal destiny. This drawing of men away from preoccupation with the wrong objects, that they may have just and influential conceptions of the right ones, has always been the problem of the religious teacher.

A remarkable peculiarity of the teaching of Jesus is that He seems to speak as if repentance were not necessary for all, as when He observes that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance. Does this mean that it is only one in a hundred that needs to repent? Jesus was speaking at the time of the publicans and sinners, and contrasting them with the scribes and Pharisees. Certainly the former class was designated by the one repentant sinner; and it would seem to follow that the latter class was signified by the ninety-and-nine. Did Jesus, then, mean that such persons as the Pharisees needed no repentance? We have already made ourselves acquainted with His estimate of the character of the Pharisees; and it would not lead us to suppose that He judged them to be in no need of repentance—quite the contrary: in His estimation Pharisaic sins were of all sins the worst. A subtle irony is, therefore, to be suspected in this reference to the ninety-and-nine who need no repentance, the suggestion being that, in their own estimate of themselves, they need no repentance, although in reality this is the clearest evidence that they do require it not less, but

more than others. It was in exactly the same vein that He said on a similar occasion, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." On this occasion also those called to repentance were the publicans and sinners, while the righteous were the scribes and Pharisees; but that the latter should be called righteous by Jesus could only be in irony, if His language about them on other occasions had any justification. This is confirmed by the parable of the Two Sons, to whom their father said, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard." The good one replied, "I go, sir," but went not; the bad one said, "I go not," but afterwards "repented and went." Evidently here again we have the same two contrasted classes. The coarse impudence of the bad boy certainly required repentance, and perhaps provoked it in his own mind by its very superfluity of naughtiness; but equally did the behaviour of the good boy demand repentance, though repentance was not so likely to follow. With the same irony the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son is described, it being apparently conceded that he is ever with his father and never has at any time transgressed his commandment; yet it is evident that he required repentance quite as much as his younger brother, if not more. But the point is unmistakeably decided in words from the Lord's own mouth, when He says to the scribes and Pharisees, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before

you ; for John came to you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not ; but the publicans and the harlots believed him ; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." Here He distinctly implies that they ought to have repented, and reproaches them with not learning to do so from the example of the publicans and sinners. With what contempt such a suggestion would be treated by them, it is easy to understand ; nevertheless His intention was perfectly sincere. The sense of sin, it has often been remarked, may be in inverse ratio to its presence. A saint on the point of passing into glory may be poignantly conscious of being the chief of sinners, whereas the most notorious sinner may be prepared to defend himself as no worse than other people. But, if there be any on earth who either are sinless or think themselves so, Jesus passes them by with the observation, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."

From the scattered sayings of our Lord on repentance it would not be difficult to collect a clear idea of the elements entering into His conception of it ; but we have received from Him one full-length picture of repentance ; and it will be more remunerative to follow this clue, taking up more casual hints as they may occur by the way. The parable of the Prodigal Son contains, indeed, more than an account of conversion or repentance ; because in its opening

verses we find a most suggestive description of that which is the very opposite of conversion—namely, the departure of the soul from God—and towards the close we have an equally pregnant account of the change which follows repentance; while in the closing verses we have a searching investigation of the true inwardness of Pharisaism, involving the solution of the problem discussed between Christ and His opponents. But, on the whole, the parable of the Prodigal Son is an account of conversion or repentance; and it is needless to say that it is an incomparable one. Every word tells; every sentence goes to the marrow of the subject; scene succeeds scene in perfect and easy arrangement; and the whole is brought to a harmonious close. We need not be afraid of putting too much into this utterance; the only danger lies in not seeing deep enough.

The point in the parable at which the description of repentance may be fairly said to commence is when the Prodigal "came to himself"; and this striking phrase may be said to show the first element in repentance to be Awakening. When a man awakens out of sleep, we say he comes to himself. The Greek means literally "he entered into himself" * —a remarkable phrase; for who is denoted by "he" and who by "himself"? It sounds as if in one person there were two men, the one of whom has been from home but now returns. So, in common par-

* εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐλθών.

lance, we say, a man is "out of himself" or "beside himself," meaning that he is mad. And, indeed, sin is a brief madness; it is a drunken sleep, out of which a man has to awaken and be himself.* Or "he entered into himself" may suggest another line of reflection. The interior man may be conceived as a picture-gallery or corridor, hung with the scenes of one's own past, into which, in hours of leisure and reflection, one can enter and follow one's own course step by step and stage by stage. Certainly this was exactly what the Prodigal did, when, in the midst of the swine, he sat down and reflected on the past. The excitement and intoxication had now gone out of his blood and the glamour out of his eyes, and in the cold reality of retrospect he saw everything in an entirely different light. To get people thus to see things as they are, forms, in all ages, the task of religious teachers. "My people do not consider," was the standing complaint of Jehovah, speaking through the prophets. Sometimes it seems as if nothing less than a miracle would awaken the unthinking. Such was the thought of Dives in the place of woe, when he begged that Abraham might be sent to his five brethren; "For," said he, "if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But the reply of divine wisdom, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," indicates the true means of

* Horace, *Epp.* ii. 138, says of a lunatic, *Redit ad sese.*

producing repentance—namely, the faithful preaching of the Word of God.

A second element in repentance is Fear: and this is indicated in the words "I perish with hunger."* These words may, indeed, in the first place rather express the deep dissatisfaction with a godless existence which also is a part of repentance. As the Prodigal began with the best of everything, but at last had sunk to the husks that the swine did eat, so, in a sinful life, though there is a stage of greedy satisfaction with the things which gratify natural desire, yet delight is succeeded by disgust; in one hour, if the instincts of the higher nature be awakened, the satisfactions of a worldly life may cease to please and the most bottomless hunger ensue. But, besides, the Prodigal was actually confronted with the fear of death. He might die of actual starvation, as many a one has done at his stage of want and degradation. This corresponds with the fear of finally losing the soul which is an element in repentance. Of this motive Jesus did not scruple to make use, as we have already seen in speaking of the final issues of sin. "Except ye repent," He said, "ye shall all likewise perish"; and another solemn saying to the same effect was, "Fear Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." This latter saying has been interpreted of the Evil One; I should think, there can be little doubt that it refers

* λιμῷ ὧδε ἀπόλλυμαι.

to God; but, taken either way, it conjures up an illimitable fear. In our day there are those who doubt whether this be a legitimate motive in religion; but the real question is, whether there be anything of this nature lurking in the future. If not, of course it is a crime to darken the minds of human beings with such a nightmare; but, if it be real, it may be criminal to be silent about it. The practice of sneering at the preoccupation of the mind with the hopes and fears of a future life was introduced by Goethe, and has since been repeated by a number of shallow spirits; but it was not worthy of the wisdom of that great man, and at all events it was in the face of the practice of a Greater than he.

A third element of repentance is a Vision of Good; and this is indicated in the parable by the words, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare." * The question has been much discussed in theology, whether, according to the teaching of the New Testament, the title "sons of God" belongs only to the saints or to all men. However the question may be answered in regard to other teachers in the New Testament, it is clear from this parable that Jesus looked upon all men as being in a sense children of God, however far they might be from living up to their dignity. The Prodigal was a son even in the far country; he could remember the paternal home; and it was this that

* περισσεύονται ἄρτων.

drew him back. This is only stating in metaphorical language that man is a religious being, dowered with religious instincts, which, though neglected and even outraged, reassert themselves in moments of reflection and fill the soul with a divine longing. Man is an immortal being; and the passion for immortality, reawakening, may make every earthly possession appear trivial. There is no more potent means of awakening this longing than acquaintance with those who are enjoying the fatherhood of God themselves in its fuller sense; for, although Jesus acknowledged a certain sonship common to all, He, at the same time, endeavoured to produce a realisation of this sonship very different from the vague aspiration after an unattained good which may arise in the heart of the common man. It was in this sense of unclouded sonship that He placed the ideal of human happiness; and the sight of those who are in the enjoyment of it awakens in the careless and sinning the sense of what they are missing. Wherever there are Christians living a life of consistency and peace, there will be in their vicinity movements of uneasiness like that which arose in the Prodigal at the vision in his mind's eye of the paternal home. Jesus Himself must have diffused such subtle impressions on every side; for, amidst the innumerable distractions to which He was exposed, it was manifest that, at the heart of His life, there was a great central peace, and amidst His sorrows it could be seen that

He was inwardly crowned with joy. The sonship in Himself, of which He testified, awoke in men the consciousness of their own.

A fourth element of repentance is Confession; and on this great stress is laid in the parable. No wonder: there is no more vital element in this state of mind. To recur again for a moment to the image of entering into oneself: the meditative mind goes from room to room in the interior galleries of reminiscence, tracing back the scenes and incidents of the past; but at last it comes to one room in which there is only a single figure; and before this object the Prodigal stands transfixed—because it is his father. Of him he had long thought little, trying even to forget him; but now the familiar features look down on him: the venerable figure, the melting eye, the gentle smile—all sink into his heart; till, casting himself in imagination before it, he cries, "Father, I have sinned." And, in the subsequent meeting with his father, this scene is repeated. In his address to his father there is the genuine accent of repentance. Once, when he was fretting against the discipline of home and planning a way of escape, he called his conduct Independence; in the far country, when bright eyes were shining on him and soft arms encircling him, he called it Pleasure; later, after he had run through his means, and friends and lovers had forsaken him, he called it Ill-luck; even when he commenced his reflections

in the course of coming to himself, he only called it Folly; but now he has found the right name, when he confesses, "I have sinned." Confession deepens the sense of sin in the mind of him who confesses. It separates the man from the sin, being a kind of violent ejection of the latter. But it has an influence, too, on him against whom we have sinned. It has a kind of atoning power. The person to whom a confession is made is thereby provoked to lift up the penitent who has voluntarily cast himself down at his feet. Jesus expressed His sense of the extraordinary virtue residing in it when He said, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him; and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." But the best of confession is that it brings the sinner and the God sinned against face to face; for the core of repentance is to recognise, not what our sinful life has been to ourselves, or even to others, but what it has been to God.

A fifth element in repentance is Decision; and this is embodied in the parable, in the words, "I will arise and go to my father."* One reason why "repentance" is not so good a translation of the New Testament term as "conversion," is that it is too frequently identified with a certain kind of senti-

* Ἀναστὰς πορεύσομαί πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου

ment apart from action. There is a great deal of penitential sentiment that ends in nothing. The drunkard is said to repent when, on awakening from a debauch with pockets empty, a brain on fire, and a throat like an open sepulchre, he calls himself fool and madman; but in nine cases out of ten he does nothing; the fit of remorse passes; and, the next time temptation offers, he succumbs again. Unless remorse culminates in action, it is not deserving of the name of repentance. The fear of danger must be strong enough to force the Prodigal to his feet, and the vision of good attractive enough to draw him on in the right direction. It is not even superfluous that it is added, "And he arose, and came to his father." Many a one has gone the length of saying, "I will arise and go to my father," and yet has never returned home. Between the far country and his home the Prodigal may have had to pass through the city where his substance had been wasted; and there some would be willing, for old acquaintance' sake, to invite him to the old haunts, or even spend a trifle on his entertainment; while others might scoff at the idea of his return in rags to a respectable home. At all events it is certain that, whenever anyone resolves to quit the far country and return to his Father, obstacles are placed in the way and desperate efforts made to turn him back. "Strait," said the Great Teacher, "is the gate; and few there be that find it."

Thus has an exposition been attempted of the portion of this parable most directly bearing on repentance, the other sayings of our Lord on the subject being at the same time woven in. Each of the five elements we have thus found in repentance might be a name for the whole. In experience sometimes one of these is more prominent and sometimes another; so that there is ample provision for variety in religious history. Almost better, however, than even the parable of the Prodigal Son as a guide to the mind of the Saviour on this subject would be an exposition of the actual cases of repentance or conversion recorded in His ministry.

One such case of profound significance is that of Zacchæus. How long this publican may have known something about Christ we are not informed; but, on the whole, his case is one of sudden conversion, and it was due principally to the attractive power of Christ, especially of His magnanimity and compassion. Zacchæus stood and said unto the Lord: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." In his latest exposition of these words—in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*—the late Dr. Bruce interprets them as an account of the habitual procedure of Zacchæus before he met with Jesus; so that what Jesus did was not to make Zacchæus a good man, but to make the world, which had misunderstood him, aware

how good he was. Zacchæus was a hidden diamond, doing acts of justice and kindness by stealth and utterly demolishing the Pharisaic and the popular conception of a publican. It cannot be denied that the words of this verse by themselves might bear this construction, or that in such an interpretation there is a certain piquancy. But what becomes of the words that follow, "To-day is salvation come to this house," or of the fervent words of Jesus immediately afterwards, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"? It is true, these words express the joy of discovery; but the discovery is a more sacred one than the unearthing of the good deeds of a misunderstood moral hero. Anyone might have made such a discovery; but the discovery made by Jesus was one possible only to Himself; and the whole scene has to be emptied of its significance and separated from the others in the Gospels which exhibit the Saviour in the very act of transforming great sinners into great saints, if this meaning is thrust upon it.

In the conversion of Zacchæus, a noteworthy feature is Restitution—a duty which ought to be preached far more than it is. Nothing exhibits more impressively the genuineness of true repentance than an earnest effort to undo the evil done in the preceding life, and this is rendered peculiarly impressive to the common man if it includes the refunding of money obtained in indefensible ways. In the recent

Welsh Revival this was a prominent feature; and Mr. D. L. Moody used to introduce this subject in his addresses with remarkable results. The other effect on Zacchæus was more commonplace—the resolution to give half his goods to the poor. We see a kindred but perhaps a finer trait of repentance in the case of another converted publican—Matthew—when he assembles the former companions of his sinful life, to give them an opportunity of meeting and hearing the Master whom he had resolved to follow.

But the most impressive instance of repentance narrated in the earthly life of our Saviour is undoubtedly that of the Woman who was a Sinner, the account of which we owe to the graceful pen of St. Luke. If, through the movements of her body—for she uttered not a word—and through the words in which Jesus commented on her action, we could penetrate to the depths of her soul, we should see repentance in its purest form. It was in flight from a besetting sin and a lost life, and in pursuit of a better life, the vision of which had risen before her eyes, that she ventured in where she dared not well be seen. There was a certain boldness in her action; but this was necessary in order to make a public break with the past. On the other hand, humility pressed her down to the earth; shame constrained her to unbind her hair and let its heavy tresses fall to hide her burning blushes; sorrow for her sins,

which were many, burst in tears from her eyes. The shattering of the box of ointment may have been the final sacrifice of an instrument of her evil calling. But it would not be easy even to name all the emotions surging through her soul—timidity, admiration, gratitude, love, enthusiasm. This was repentance: it is an upheaval of the nature from its foundations; it turns the life upside down; it is a decisive breach with the past; it is a great venture for the future.*

* If Professor Bruce wrote with imperfect wisdom on Zacchæus, we have from his pen, in his choice book entitled *The Galilean Gospel*, a noble exposition of the case of the Woman who was a Sinner, from which a few sentences may be quoted. "Jesus believed in the possibility of moral transformation. Sin He knew and declared to be a bondage, but He did not regard it as a fixed final doom. The soul might shake off its fetters; a powerful reaction might take place in the conscience at any moment, resulting in complete and permanent emancipation. . . . A second item in the permanent didactic significance of this incident is, that much sin can be repented of and therefore forgiven. 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.' There is no reason in this universe, Christ says in effect, why a grievous offender against moral laws should not enter into peace. All things work together for his good, even the uncancelled ills of his own state, and in the state of others injured by his misdeeds; the one working in him meekness and patience, the other awakening in him a mighty desire to be henceforth a blessing instead of a curse to his fellow-creatures. . . . Happy for the world if this part of Christ's Gospel be true. For the world does not consist for the most part of little sinners. Men and women in vast numbers go wrong greatly, tragically. A gospel which excluded them would be altogether a one-sided, mean, uninteresting affair, bringing a petty salvation to people

of petty character, the elect circle of moral mediocrity, that supplies no theme to the historian, the dramatist, the artist, or the preacher. . . . Yet another lesson of this incident is that a great sinner may become a great saint. The *rationale* of this is simple. A great sinner, penitent and forgiven, will love much. He will be characterized by great devotion to the Redeemer. But devotion to Christ is the cardinal Christian virtue, the mother of all the virtues. Again, a great sinner means a man of great, misdirected energy, full of passion and life-force. When he is converted, he does not lose his energy. The driving power remains. All that takes place is that the power receives a new direction and is utilised for new purposes. Made free from sin, it becomes the servant of righteousness, and in this service gains distinction equal to its former bad notoriety in the service of evil." Then Dr. Bruce quotes the following sentences of marvellous beauty from Bunyan's *Jerusalem Sinner Saved:* "Alas, Christ has but little thanks for the saving of little sinners. To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. He gets not water for His feet by His saving of such sinners. There are abundance of dry-eyed Christians in the world, and abundance of dry-eyed duties too—duties that were never wetted with the tears of contrition and repentance, nor sweetened with the great sinner's box of ointment. Wherefore His way is oftentimes to step out of the way, to Jericho, to Samaria, to the country of the Gergasenes, to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and also to Mount Calvary, that He may lay hold of such sinners as will love Him to His liking."

FAITH

Matt. viii. 10, 26.
ix. 22, 28, 29.
xi. 6, 28.
xiii. 44, 46.
xiv. 31.
xv. 28.
xvi. 8.
xvii. 17, 20.
xviii. 6.
xxi. 21, 22, 32.
xxiii. 23.
xxiv. 13, 23, 26.

Mark i. 15.
iii. 13.
iv. 12, 20, 40.
v. 30, 36.
vi. 6, 50.
viii. 17-21.
ix. 19, 23, 42.
x. 14, 15, 21, 52.
xi. 22-24.
xiii. 11.

Luke vi. 47.
vii. 9, 50.
viii. 2, 13, 25, 48, 50.
xiv. 17.
xvi. 16.
xvii. 6, 19.
xviii. 8, 22, 42.
xxii. 32, 67.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAITH

AS has been seen above, the first step upwards, out of unrighteousness towards Christian character, is repentance; and now we go on to the second, which is Faith.

In his address at Miletus to the elders of Ephesus, reported in the twentieth chapter of Acts, St. Paul characterized his own activity, extending over three years, in the capital of the province of Asia, by saying that he had testified to both Jews and Greeks "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no reason to believe that the scope of his preaching was narrowed down to any scrupulously exclusive range of topics; for his writings testify that in this respect his line of conduct was always singularly free and catholic; yet, however widely his preaching ranged, it always returned to two topics, which would be remembered by his hearers when all details were forgotten—repentance and faith. But the repentance preached by St. Paul is expressly characterized by himself as directed "towards God," and the faith as directed

"towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ was, then, the object of faith in the preaching of the Apostle. But the question may be raised, whether Christ was also the object of faith in His own preaching. In his recently published book, *The Essence of Christianity*, Professor Harnack has maintained that Christ did not enter as an element into His own preaching: He preached faith, indeed, but it was faith towards God, not towards Himself.* Thus there would be a fundamental difference between the testimony of St. Paul and that of the Founder of Christianity; but we must see whether the drawing of such a distinction is justified.

The prominence of faith in the scheme of doctrine proceeding from St. Paul is so manifest that it cannot escape the most careless eye. But faith holds a position hardly less prominent in the teaching of Jesus, although it is introduced in an entirely different way.

Jesus expressed great satisfaction with any unusual exhibition of faith. Thus, when a centurion, who resided at Capernaum, encountered Him at a distance from that town and, in language of singular freshness and force, expressed the conviction that Jesus was able to heal his son with a word, without going to the place where the patient lay, it is reported that Jesus, having heard it, marvelled, and said to those who followed: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not

* "Nicht der Sohn, sondern allein der Vater gehört in das Evangelium, wie es Jesus verkündigt hat, hinein," p. 91.

found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Similarly, when the Syrophœnician Woman divined the willingness of His heart beneath the roughness of His manner, expressing, in terms even more original than those employed by the centurion, her belief that He would not refuse to help her, He exclaimed: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Socrates used to say of himself, that he was to his disciples what the midwife is to a woman in labour, delivering them of the births of their own minds; and this maieutic office, which Socrates discharged to knowledge, Jesus may be said to have discharged to faith. As a sympathetic teacher is quick to mark the dawning of talent, and tempts it forth by every kind of artifice, so, wherever Jesus discerned the slightest sign of faith, He trimmed the smoking flax with unfailing assiduity. Thus, when He was on His way with Jairus to the deathbed of his daughter, and a messenger met them with the news that the little maid had actually expired, Jesus turned instantly to the father and, to prevent him from being staggered by the evil tidings, said: "Be not afraid: only believe." But the most remarkable instance of this kind was that of the father of the demoniac boy, who met Jesus, as He descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, and begged for His compassion. Demoralised by the inability of the apostles to heal his son, the poor man had almost fallen into despair and appealed to

Jesus with the unworthy phrase: "If thou canst do anything." But Jesus at once pulled him up with the rejoinder: "If *thou* canst:* all things are possible to him that believeth." Thus did Jesus draw forth faith almost with violence; but the harsh method was successful; for the man replied, with tears—and never was there a more touching example of faith struggling with unbelief and overcoming it—"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

If Jesus thus delighted in the display of faith, He was correspondingly disappointed at any conspicuous evidence of the lack of it; and too often it was His fortune to encounter this state of mind. Even among the Twelve faith was ever and anon breaking down in the face of some new emergency; hence a common form of address to them was: "O ye of little faith!" and one of the very last phrases in which He apostrophized them, before leaving them altogether, was: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe!" If this was the case with apostles, it was no wonder that He should meet with irresponsiveness outside the circle of His followers: His fellow-countrymen He called "a faithless generation"; and of His fellow-townsmen at Nazareth it is narrated that He "marvelled" at their unbelief.

While, however, it is true that faith occupies in the teaching of Christ a place so prominent, it cannot be

* Mark ix. 22. This is one of the gems of the Revised Version.

alleged with truth that it has in His teaching the same simple sense as in the epistles of St. Paul. On the contrary, the word "faith," together with the corresponding verb "believe," has in the teaching of Christ a remarkable variety of meanings, and it is evident that we can hope to obtain a correct and comprehensive knowledge of His mind on this great subject only by a careful study of them all.

When He says: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" it is evident that the faith recommended is trust in God's providence—the belief that He means well by all His creatures and will supply the bodily wants of those whom He has allowed to be born into the world. Not dissimilar to this are the frequent utterances in which He recommends believing prayer, as when He says: "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." No doubt this faith might be carried up to a higher plane than that of the purely natural life: it might relate directly to the kingdom of God and to work for that kingdom; but it seems to begin on the purely natural ground and to be an inference from the general relation of God to all His intelligent creatures.

Secondly, faith, in the mouth of Jesus, frequently means belief in His own miraculous powers. When the diseased came seeking to be cured, He would ask: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" When they had been cured, He assured them that it was their faith which had made them whole; and in at least one passage we are told that He could do no mighty works in a certain place because of unbelief. Akin to this was the power of working miracles with which, He promised, faith would endow the disciples: "These signs shall follow them that believe: in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and, if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover."*

Thirdly, He attributes to faith the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of the soul. Thus, to the Woman who was a Sinner He said: "Thy faith hath saved thee"; and in the parable of the Sower He says of a certain class of hearers, that "the devil cometh and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." Sayings of this sort are obviously those most akin to the characteristic utterances of St. Paul on the same subject; but it cannot be honestly affirmed that they are numerous among the words of Jesus.

That which is characteristic in the teaching of Jesus

* Reading, however, more than doubtful.

on the subject of faith is the variety of senses in which the term is employed; but is there no point of view from which these can be all harmonized? I venture to think there is, and it is a very simple one.

Although faith is a theological term and is of incessant occurrence in the language of religion, it is, nevertheless, in the first place a purely human act; it is an element in ordinary life, without which the world could not go on for a single day. Every hour we are performing acts of faith towards our fellow-men, as well as acts of disbelief; and, if we analyze what faith towards man is, we shall obtain a key to the question what faith towards God or Christ is. It is entirely in accord with the mind of Christ to look upon the life of faith toward men as a school in which to acquire a knowledge of faith on a higher level. What, then, is it we do when we put faith in a fellow-creature? Is it not this—that we accept him as he offers himself to us, and act accordingly? Thus, a teacher of any science puts himself forward as an adept in his particular department; and those who wish to acquire that science, if they believe in him, wait on his prelections and accept with confidence the information he conveys. Or, in friendship, when anyone exhibits the signs of affection, to put faith in him is to receive these as not counterfeit, but genuine, and permit our own affection and esteem to go out in return.

Exactly similar is faith in God. Though hidden from our eyes, He has in different forms sent us messages and communications; and to receive these with confidence and act upon them is faith; which may, therefore, be defined as the sympathetic and appreciative response of the human mind and heart to divine revelation, in whatever form it may come. This one idea will be found to include all the different senses in which Jesus speaks of faith.

Thus, in the works of nature God has sent to all mortals a message, which the observant mind cannot mistake. He feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies—what is this but an intimation that He will feed and clothe those who know themselves to be more valuable in the divine eyes than birds or flowers? And, when we receive this message with intelligence and gratitude, and, therefore, live without carefulness, this is faith.

Again, God has sent us a very full and varied message in His Word, wherein He has signified His own thoughts and wishes about many things that intimately concern us; and, when we turn to the Scriptures for information on these subjects and, having found it, act upon it, we are putting faith in God. "O fools, and slow of heart," said Jesus, "to believe all that the prophets have written." Every prophet was, indeed, in his own person, an embodied message from Heaven, and faith was tested by the manner in which he was received. If

his appearance was welcomed, if his utterances were attended to with reverence and the reforms he advocated carried out, those so acting displayed faith in God; whereas the opposite mode of action was a manifestation of unbelief. "John," said Jesus, "came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him; and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him."

It is only the completion of the same line of reflection to say that Christ Himself was an embodied message from God to the world, His various modes of activity—such as His discourses, His works of healing, and the influence of His character—being the syllables and the sentences of this message, and the whole together forming one grand expression of the mind and heart of God, offering saving help to the children of men; and to attend to this message, to welcome it with gratitude, to place confidence in it and to act on it—this was faith. This is the most vital point in the doctrine of Jesus on this subject; and it shows that faith is, at the core, not the acceptance of beliefs or dogmas, but a relation or bearing towards Christ Himself—a transaction between person and person.*

* "Ist uns klar geworden, dass das, was Gott uns sagen will am deutlichsten darin ausgedrückt ist, dass uns die Person Jesu gegeben ist, so beginnt unsere Andacht in Ehrfurcht

The earthly life of the Son of God was a school of faith, and He was a teacher of the art of faith. His miracles, for example, were intended to evoke not only faith in Him as a wonder-worker, but faith in Him also as a source of higher benefits. While many reasons may be assigned for the working of miracles, the chief must always be this—that the healing of the body illustrated the salvation of the soul. As the bodies of men are afflicted with many varieties of disease, so are their souls with many kinds of sins; and, by grappling with all bodily ills, as these were brought to Him, Jesus signified that He was able with equal success to deal with the maladies of the soul. How exact the parallel was may be learned from the fact that to the Woman who was a Sinner, when He forgave her sins, He said the very same as He used to say to those cured of bodily infirmities: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." *

In Christ's school of faith there was what may be called an upper class. Not a few, in the Gospel history, like Jairus and the Syrophœnician Woman,

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und gipfelt in Dank, Freude und Friede. Denn wenn wir diese Thatsache und unsere ganze durch diese Thatsache gekennzeichnete Lage als den Ausdruck dessen verstehen, was Gott uns sagen will, so fühlen wir uns von einer Liebe umfangen, die uns völlig demüthigt und uns wunderbar vergiebt [erhebt?]"—From an article on "Andacht," by W. Herrmann, in Hauck's *Realencyclopädie*.

* Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.

came to Him seeking help not for themselves, but for their relatives; and it was given in answer to their prayers. In cases of bodily illness the cure seems sometimes to have been given without the co-operation of the faith of the patient. In spiritual healing the latter was naturally essential; but it might be awakened by the antecedent faith of friends. Of this there is a remarkable illustration in the case of the man brought to Jesus by four neighbours and let down through the roof. "Jesus, seeing their faith," we are told, "said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." What the four bearers had in view was the bodily restoration of their friend; but their faith, in combination with the hallowed presence into which they had brought him, awakened faith in the paralytic himself not only for the bodily cure, but for the higher blessing as well; whereupon Christ bestowed both. This is a marvellous case; yet it has its analogies in Christian ministries in all ages which, although contemplating bodily effects in the first place, yet may awaken interior instincts and activities by which the soul reaches out to the apprehension of more perfect and enduring benefits.

This reminds us that there was a still more advanced class in the school of Christ, composed of those who were privileged to work miracles in His name. These signs and wonders were wrought by

faith, and, when they failed, and those who had in vain attempted to work them were put to shame, as in the case of the demoniac boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, the failure was due to unbelief. But, in performing such acts, the apostles were serving their apprenticeship to the still higher miracle of converting the world; and especially they were learning the lesson that in such work nothing except faith is of any avail. It was to this, and not to physical marvels, that their Master was referring when He affirmed that, if they had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, they could remove mountains. The obstacles in the way of the conversion of the world were great as mountains, but faith could remove them, and faith alone.

There is something bewildering in the statement of Jesus that effects deserving to be described in such terms may be wrought by faith like a grain of mustard-seed. This is a clear proof that the virtue of faith consists not in itself, but in the fact that it gives God His opportunity: it is simply the opening of the soul to admit God, that He may act; and it is by His action that the miracles are performed.

Now we may be able to answer the question raised by Harnack as to whether Christ is an element in His own Gospel—whether He challenged faith to-

wards Himself. In the first place, it may be laid down as certain that He sought no faith for Himself apart from His Father. Whenever Christ is offered, it is the Father who is dealing with those to whom He is offered. The Father is constantly repeating the words He uttered in the days of our Lord's flesh: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him," thus commending His Son and pressing Him on the acceptance of sinners. It is with the Father that sinners have primarily to do; and it is He who, in offering salvation, offers it in Christ. This was clearly indicated by Jesus Himself when He said: "He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." But Jesus also offers Himself as Saviour with a relative independence; and He takes no anxious thought to remind us that He is not acting on His own initiative. Of this the most critical examples are found in those cases where He claims to forgive sins, because it is manifest that He who can forgive sins can bestow all the blessings of salvation. Now, on the two most outstanding occasions when He expressly forgave sins—those of the Woman that was a Sinner and of the paralytic borne of four—He was directly challenged as a blasphemer, because none can forgive sins but God only. And what did He reply? Did He explain that He was only the agent of Another? This is the explanation now given for Him by those who allege that He is not the subject of His own preaching; what they

say is that He was only emphasizing the forgiving nature of God and, as one intimate with His mind, assuring those who were exercising faith that God had pardoned them. But why did not Jesus state this Himself? A single word to this effect would have put Him right. Yet He did not utter it, preferring to die as a blasphemer. It is unnecessary to draw the inference.*

Thus have I endeavoured to analyze the direct statements in which our Lord makes use of the words "faith" and "believe"; the result being, it must be confessed, less definite and simple than that arising from a study of the use of the same words by St. Paul. There is an element of figurativeness, one might almost say of exaggeration, in the language of Jesus on this subject which baffles us; and in His words faith is less frequently pointed straight at the justification of sinners than its connection with this experience in the theology of the Reformation might lead us to expect.† But there is a class

* "Man reads not of forgiveness in the flowers or the stars; nor does he hear of it from the lips of men, or from any creature. And yet forgiveness is what he needs, and is restlessly in search of. There is only One who can give it; and He says, 'Come unto Me.'"—*Colloquia Peripatetica*—one of the new sayings of Rabbi Duncan in the sixth edition of this precious book.

† How far this act of trust involved at the same time, consciously or unconsciously, intellectual belief is a question of great importance, but it does not concern us here. "Der

of sayings from the mouth of our Lord, in which the words "faith" and "believe" are not employed, yet the true signification and force of faith are perhaps brought out more clearly and impressively than in the passages where these words do occur

Foremost among such sayings stands the great one of Matt. xi. 28-30: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." In sketching the contemporaries of Jesus, we have had occasion to refer to several sorts of which the population of Palestine was composed—

Nachweis," says Holtzmann (*Neutestamentliche Theologie*, i. 372), "der Continuität und des Einklangs der messianishen Predigt mit der alttest. Offenbarungsgeschichte war das erste Erforderniss, wenn die Einen ihren Glauben an Jesus festhalten, die Anderen ihm mit voller Uberzeugung zufallen sollten; ihn zu führen ist fur die Redner in Jerusalem (Act. vii. 2-53) wie in der Heidenwelt (xiii. 17-23) erste Pflicht und Ausgabe. Alles kommt darauf an, Jesu persönliche Geschicke nicht bloss als aus dem offenbarungsgeschichtlich im Voraus festgestellten Rahmen des Messianismus nicht herausfallend, sondern als ihn gegentheils erst recht ausfüllend, das in demselben bisher bloss Angedeutete kräftig ausmalend, die leeren Stellen des Bildes ergänzend, erscheinen zu lassen. Wer sich von dieser prästabilirten Harmonie des Alten und des Neuen uberzeugt hatte, der war ein 'Gläubiger' nach ältestem Stil; er glaubte dass dieser ist der Christ (ix. 22; xvii. 3) oder 'der Sohn Gottes' (ix. 20; cf. xviii. 5, 28), nicht bloss in dem Sinne einer persönlichen Entscheidung fur das ihn berührende and überwältigende Göttliche, sondern zugleich auch in dem Sinne eines Urtheils uber Geschichtsgang und Weltzusammenhang. So war 'Glauben' und 'Glauben' von Anfang an zweierlei, der Begriff ein von Haus aus amphibolischer, entsprechend der Combination eines historischen und eines idealen Factors im Glaubensgegenstand."

the publicans and sinners, the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees and the high-priests—but we must now devote more ample attention to one class on the members of which Jesus primarily had His eye when He gave this invitation to the labouring and the heavy-laden. In the beginning of the Gospel we obtain glimpses of a section of Jewish society very unlike those whom Jesus comprehensively addressed as His "generation" and of which He gave such a deplorable account. Sprinkled sparsely over the land, there were hidden souls in whom all the discipline of the Old Testament, including the commandments of the Law, the enthusiasm of the Prophets, the preaching of the Baptist, which had so signally failed with the majority, had done its work. There were homes in which the fire of religion was sedulously trimmed, though it had gone out on the public altars. Such a home was that of Jesus Himself. Such was also the home of the Baptist, of whose parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, it is said that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." To this class belonged Simeon and Anna, of the former of whom it is said that he was "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him," while of the latter it is remarked that "she spake of Him to all those that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." The latter words describe the whole

class, although there is reason to believe that they were not confined to the capital but scattered over all parts of the land. They might be few, but they were infinitely important; they were the salt of the country in an age of corruption. They knew one another; they spake often one to another, sighing their griefs and whispering their hopes into one another's ears. Happily there have been preserved to us pretty comprehensive expressions of their sentiments in the Hymn of Mary, the prophecies of Elizabeth and her husband, and the address of Simeon; and in these documents we can see what was the state of their minds. It was a state of trouble: they were filled with shame at the degradation of their country and with grief at the evils of the age. They felt like people sitting in darkness waiting for the dayspring, or prisoners sighing in their cells for liberty. The yoke of the law was on their consciences—that yoke of which St. Peter, truly interpreting their sentiments, said that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear it—and the blood of bulls and goats failed to give them peace. These were the tender consciences on which the scribes in the synagogues laid heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, which, although they tried loyally to be obedient, they were unable to carry. In short, they were labouring and heavy-laden; and, I think we may say, they were exactly in the state of mind into which Jesus attempted to bring others

by preaching His doctrine of repentance—a state of tender humility and expectant receptivity.

To this class, then, Jesus addressed Himself; and what He said was, "Come unto Me." This was precisely equivalent to an invitation to believe on Himself or to exercise faith; but the invitation was couched in an untechnical and singularly attractive form. It made faith exceedingly simple. There He was, visible in the flesh; and the labouring and heavy-laden were invited to go to Him, to talk with Him, to lay bare to His sympathetic ear the sorrow and anxiety with which they were vexed and burdened. Sometimes He varied the form of the invitation, and, instead of speaking of men coming to Him, requested them to "receive" Him. That is to say, instead of representing His door as open for them to come to, He represented Himself as going to their door and asking to be admitted—an attitude, if possible, even more simple and gracious.

The promise with which this great saying concludes, "And I will give you rest," must be interpreted in accordance with the meaning put upon the words "labour and are heavy-laden"; for the obvious intention of the Speaker is that those who come to Him are to rest from the labours and burdens indicated in this phrase, whatever these may be. We cannot be wrong in assuming it to mean at least that they shall rest from all that is involved in repentance; and so the statement comes uncommonly

near to that of one of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

The best comment, however, is in Christ's own words that follow: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls; for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." The yoke was the commonest sight in Palestine both in town and country. It was a wooden frame, laid on the necks of two oxen and binding them at once to each other and to the burden, with which it was connected by means of a pole extending back between the pair. So that what Jesus promises is to pull in the same yoke with anyone who accepts His invitation. They shall travel forward side by side, and the burden shall be His burden. Whatever the burden be—guilt, duty, care, death itself—He shares it. No wonder He adds that the burden is light. Jesus was not in the habit of speaking of the yoke He imposed as easy or the burden light, as we shall see in a subsequent portion of His doctrine: on the contrary, He represented His yoke as painful and crushing. Both representations are true, but this one contains the profounder truth. St. Augustine has a beautiful illustration of the paradox. How, asks he, can a burden be light? And he answers: Look at the eagle! what mighty pinions has nature affixed to his shoulders! they must be heavy! To any other

bearer at least they would be an intolerable obstacle and embarrassment. But, fixed where they have been placed by nature, they raise the royal bird and carry it up into the eye of the sun. And so does Christ's burden; because duty becomes nature when it is inspired by love.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

Matt. iv. 19.	Mark i. 17, 20.	Luke v. 27.
v. 13-16, 43-48.	ii. 14.	vi. 40.
viii. 22.	viii. 34.	viii. 1-3.
ix. 9.	xiv. 28.	ix. 23, 57-62.
x. 38.	xv. 41.	xiv. 25-35.
xi. 29.		
xvi. 24.		
xix. 21, 28.		
Matt. v. 3-12.	Mark iii. 12.	Luke v. 14.
vi. 1-18.	v. 43.	ix. 21, 48.
ix. 30.	vii. 36.	x. 13, 21.
x. 16.	viii. 26, 30.	xiv. 7-11.
xi. 25, 29.	ix. 30, 33-37, 50.	xvii. 7-11.
xviii. 4, 22.	x. 13-16, 42-45.	xviii. 14, 16, 17.
xix. 14.	xiv. 61.	xxii. 25-27.
xx. 25-28.	xv. 3-5.	
xxiii. 8-12		

CHAPTER IX.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

IN the vocabulary of Jesus, the most significant expression for faith is the invitation, "Come unto Me." To this, in its turn, succeeds the equally characteristic invitation, "Follow Me," which recurs with great frequency in the records. And this is the third stage of Christian progress.

When, in the days of His flesh, our Lord said to anyone, "Follow Me," the first and most obvious meaning of the invitation was a very concrete one indeed. He was an itinerant preacher, moving from town to town and from province to province; and it was a call to accompany Him on His journeys. Thus, St. Matthew quitted the receipt of custom, and of St. John and St. James it is related that they "left the ship and their father and followed Him." St. Peter, a married man, had to leave his family; and how much this meant to him may be inferred from his own blunt words afterwards, "Master, we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?"

In reading the Gospels, everyone must have been

perplexed as to the actual extent of such a call on the part of Jesus. To the prosaic mind difficulties suggest themselves as to how those were to find support who literally obeyed the call, and as to what was to become of their families and dependents in their absence. Was the abandonment of home and occupation intended to be permanent or only temporary? In certain cases the decision must surely be given for the latter alternative. The women, for example, who "followed" Him from Galilee cannot have been intended to abandon their homes forever. We hear of at least one candidate for a place among His followers to whom He gave orders to return at once to his friends; yet such a dismissal must have been compatible with the doing of all that was most essential in following Him. It is questionable how far even the Twelve understood at first that they were abandoning their secular callings forever; and there are indications that, after the death of their Master, the thought occurred to them that the time had come for returning to their original employments.

Perhaps, indeed, the cast-iron system of modern society in the West, in which everyone is fixed down in a position involving incessant duties, the punctual fulfilment of which is the prime mark of character, may cause the situation of those called by Jesus to appear to us more formidable

than it actually was. The elementary necessaries of life, such as food, clothing and shelter, demand far more unremitting attention in a climate like ours than they did in the East, with its genial atmosphere and simple diet. In Palestine, even before the time of Christ, it seems to have been no uncommon thing for the disciples of a rabbi to follow him wherever he went; and I have been told by a living Jew that, if at the present day there were to appear anywhere in the Jewish world a teacher of exceptional genius and sanctity, pilgrimages, to see and hear him, would be made from great distances by the devout, some of whom might be found staying for a prolonged period in his vicinity, for the purpose of picking up the crumbs of wisdom. Since the rise of monasticism in the fourth century it has been demonstrated on the great scale, in the history of both Eastern and Western Christendom, how ample a response may be given to a call to abandon the world with all its pursuits and prizes. Indeed, in certain states of mind there seems to be an attraction in renunciation, and motives of many kinds may constrain thereto. But the question difficult to decide is, how far Jesus aimed at this. Undoubtedly there were some whom He meant to employ as agents of His kingdom to such an extent that they could do nothing else, their time and strength being so covenanted to His peculiar mission that

they could not have followed secular callings; but there is no reason to believe that these were the only hearers to whom He addressed the call, "Follow Me." The majority even of those who obeyed must ultimately have returned to the usual occupations of human beings. Yet it was probably involved that, for a time at least, they should remain in close attendance on His person.

The purpose for which He desired to have near Him those whom He invited to follow Him was that they might hear His preaching and learn His doctrine. Jesus had in His own mind a system of truth—the final and perfect revelation of God to the world—and He kept His followers long enough about Him to stamp its leading principles on their minds. On scarcely any topic did he speak more copiously than on the inestimable advantage of hearing the truth from His lips. He declared that Mary, in sitting at His feet for this purpose, was doing the one thing needful; and, in concluding the summary of His doctrine delivered in the Sermon on the Mount, He solemnly averred that what He had spoken was the foundation on which the life of every hearer must be built, whereas the hearer who neglected what he had listened to must come to utter ruin, like a house on the sand swept away by a flood. Jesus was keenly aware of the advantages, with which every teacher is familiar, of continuous instruction. As a child sent to school only at irregular

intervals will never have more than a smattering of education, and as anyone who has only a smattering of any subject, such as a foreign language, very soon, without practice, loses it altogether, so Jesus was acutely conscious that the knowledge which He had to communicate could only be acquired with time, patience and application, each acquisition being made the stepping-stone for another on a higher level; and, therefore, He coveted not only hearers, but "disciples"—the first name which His followers bore. This was precisely what was in His mind when He said, "Take heed how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and, whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." This saying is based on an observation of business-life which it may surprise us to find Him making, but which is familiar to all who have any acquaintance with this department of things, and it graphically illustrates His point. The man who has capital can buy on favourable terms and can wait for a favourable market in which to sell; so that he who has much is in the way to have more. The man, on the contrary, without capital can make no terms with the buyer but must get quit of his property at once, whatever it may bring; if he incur a bad debt, or if any other mischance befall him—and such accidents abound in every kind of business—he is blown over, and loses the little he has. Some striking case of

this sort, with which perhaps He made acquaintance during His own business-life at Nazareth, must have made a deep impression on the mind of Jesus, for He employs the illustration more than once and for more than one purpose; but here, what He is insisting on is its application to the hearing of the truth, His meaning being this: he who knows but little of divine truth is very apt to lose it all; but he who advances far into this region sees new avenues opening before him on every hand, and, the more he knows, the keener grows his thirst for knowledge.

Not only did those who followed Jesus hear His teaching in its native order and connection, but they enjoyed the inestimable privilege of questioning Him in secret about anything they had not been able to understand in His public utterances. "When Jesus was alone," says St. Mark, "He expounded all things to His disciples." Of these private questionings and explanations some specimens have been preserved in the Gospels, and they show at a glance how much the disciples must have profited by these opportunities.

There is another in the New Testament besides Jesus who says to others, "Follow me." * This is St. Paul. We should hardly have expected any mere man to be so bold; only, when he says, "Be ye

* 2 Tim. iii. 10; cf. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

followers of me," he is careful to add, "As I also am of Christ"; * so that, after all, here also it is the following of Christ which is involved. When, however, St. Paul said this, it is evident he was not inviting others to come after him in the sense of joining his company and performing along with him his missionary journeys, but to imitate him in his "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience." This supplies us with another interpretation of the language of St. Paul's Master,† when He says, "Follow Me": He means, "Imitate Me."

It is, indeed, not a little curious that St. Paul, in challenging the imitation of his own example, employs language more strong and direct than Jesus does in the same circumstances.‡ Jesus rather invites His hearers in unmistakeable terms to be imitators of God, that they may thereby prove themselves to be His genuine children, as when He says, in the Sermon on the Mount, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

† Huther, in Meyer's Commentary, is of opinion that in this verse *παρηκολούθησας* does not mean exactly "imitate"; but between this and the meaning assigned by him there is hardly a shade of difference.

‡ *Μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε* in 1 Cor. iv. 16, and xi. 1—in Revised Version translated "imitators." In 1 Thess. i. 6 (same verb), "Ye became imitators of us and of the Lord," and ii. 14, "Ye became imitators of the churches of God." In Phil. iii. 17 we have the variation *ζυμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.*

you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" or, a little farther on, utters the marvellous injunction, "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But, even if the idea of imitation were not involved linguistically in that of following, we might well look upon it as included, every time our Lord uttered this call, on account of the nature of the case; for those who responded to His call, if they did so to any extent in the spirit of sympathy and comradeship in which they had been invited, must have been unawares involved in imitation. Not only had they His perfection before their eyes, as one may have a model which is being copied, but from day to day there were being wafted towards them those subtler influences which flow from personality, and their susceptibility to these was growing from month to month by the growth of their attachment to Himself. If it is a commonplace of ethical doctrine that character is formed by friendship, and if most of those who have attained to anything remarkable in this direction have traced their excellence to association with the good and wise, it was inevitable that those who associated with Jesus as long and closely as did the Twelve should catch something of His spirit and be touched with His greatness, unless there was

some impenetrable obstacle, as there was in the case of Judas. In point of fact, this unique opportunity did thus benefit the Twelve; for, while they were born in an obscurity from which there is no reason for thinking any of them would ever, but for Him, have emerged, they grew, in association with their Master, to such moral stature and spiritual power that what they became is now one of the most eloquent of all testimonies to the character of Christ.

What the character of Jesus was many have attempted to tell; and such attempts will be multiplied in the future, as they ought to be; because none of them are either altogether successful or altogether in vain, and every increase of experience helps to open the mystery. This is a topic with which American theology has specially concerned itself, and many striking portraitures of the Divine Man are to be reckoned among its productions. Of these the very latest speaks of His strength, His sincerity, His reasonableness, His poise, His originality, His narrowness, His breadth, His trust, His brotherliness, His optimism, His chivalry, His firmness, His generosity, His candour, His enthusiasm, His gladness, His humility, His patience, His courage, His indignation, His reverence, His holiness, His greatness, in successive chapters.* In an effort of this kind

* Jefferson, *The Character of Jesus.*

justly famous,* the combination in His character of opposite virtues—such as those of the masculine with those of the feminine type, habits of activity with habits of contemplation, sympathy with God with sympathy with man—is employed with the happiest result. It would be possible to take a single quality of outstanding prominence in His character, such as love, and group round it all the rest or develop them out of it; or one of His haunting ideas, such as the will of God, might be taken as the key. In spite of the narrow limits of the Gospels, so much is crowded into their narratives that it is possible to follow Jesus through nearly every department of human existence and observe His demeanour and bearing in characteristic experiences, and in this way there may be constructed an image of Christ in the home, in the State, in the Church, in friendship, in society, as a man of prayer, as a student of Scripture, as a worker, as a sufferer, as a philanthropist, as a winner of souls, as a preacher, as a teacher, as a controversialist, as a man of feeling, as an influence.

But our present design leads us to look for an indication in His own words; and this can be found in the Beatitudes. In an earlier part of this book there has been occasion to show that these remarkable statements are not primarily intended to enumerate the virtues of the character demanded or created by Christ, but rather to exhibit the blessings and rewards

* In Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural.*

which Christianity brings to those who accept it, and that, therefore, the final part of every beatitude is the most essential. Nevertheless, the Beatitudes do give prominence to certain elements of character, which might be capable of being combined into a complete picture. These Jesus demanded in others; but He exemplified them in Himself. In the Beatitudes He praises the aspirations of others, but He at the same time describes His own attainments; He is the character which He describes. How fully, for example, to Him must have come the blessedness of the "peacemakers"; the very aim of His life being to make peace between God and man, and between man and man. When He says, "Blessed are the merciful," we are reminded of such a characteristic notice as that which says that "He had compassion on the multitude, because they were hungry and were scattered like sheep without a shepherd," or of His prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," or of the gracious word which He spoke at the same time to the penitent thief. It requires no demonstration that the blessedness of "the pure in heart" must have been His portion beyond that of any other of the children of men. None ever so passionately as He "hungered and thirsted after righteousness," the earliest recorded word of His maturity being, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and the same aspiration after the

approving verdict of God accompanying Him to the end, as we easily assure ourselves by listening to His prayer in Gethsemane. "Blessed are they that mourn" was realised in the Man of Sorrows, who, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reflects, was made perfect through sufferings. If it is a quality of character which is expressed in the last of the Beatitudes, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely," it is needless to prove that it belonged in unparalleled measure to Him.

There is still, however, something lacking to bind into one these scattered features of character; and there was one occasion when Jesus called upon men more directly to imitate His example than when He merely said "Follow Me"; and then He singled out a quality as peculiarly His own. This was when He said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

The quality designated by these adjectives was one familiar to those who first heard the words of Jesus; for it is often designated by the same terms, and by other kindred ones, in the Old Testament, where it is the special character of the people of Jehovah, who promises all blessings to those who are distinguished by it. It was the constant aspiration of the circle in which Jesus was brought up, as can be seen in the prevalence of the same language in the songs with which the advent of the Messiah

was greeted by such worthies as Simeon and Elizabeth. Before attributing it to Himself, Jesus demanded it from others, if they wished to be His disciples; for not only is the third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek," but the very first, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," might, as far as the meaning is concerned, have been, "Blessed are the meek and lowly in heart." Indeed, the third beatitude is a translation from Psalm xxxvii., and the Hebrew word there rendered "meek" is not infrequently rendered "poor" in other Old Testament passages.*

Here, then, we apparently have not only a favourite idea of Jesus, but the most outstanding feature of His character, to which those must specially direct their attention who desire to copy His example. It betokens both a certain attitude towards God and a certain behaviour towards man. Towards God it is an attitude of perfect submission to His will, however hard it be to bear, as well as perfect loyalty to His commands, however difficult these may be to execute; and towards man it is patience with his errors, as well as helpfulness in every time of need. All the qualities placed in the forefront of the Beatitudes are but different forms of a receptiveness which lays the heart open before God, empty, that He may fill it with His forgiveness, grace and strength. Divine forgiveness, however, begets a disposition to forgive,

* See the excellent articles on πραΰς and ταπεινός in Cremer's *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

and, where the divine fulness has been received, there is a tendency to pour forth on others the overflow of this wealth.

As this was the secret of Jesus' own character, it is no wonder that He recommended it on all occasions to others. Of pride in all its forms He was a determined enemy; for He detected in it not only selfishness and lovelessness towards man, but a setting-up of man against God. He scourged it, as we have seen, in the conduct of the Pharisees. He had to rebuke it, too, in His own disciples, who, to the very last, were contending among themselves which of them should be the greatest. He seems to have had the maxim often in His mouth, that "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

In all ages, when men have contrasted the spirit of Christ with the spirit of the world and the estimates of philosophy with those of Christianity, it has been recognised that there is no more distinguishing mark of Christian Ethics than this preference for the character which can be described as "meek and lowly." As if to emphasize the contrast beforehand, Aristotle places, as the crown of the human character which his philosophy was intended to form, two qualities—magnificence and highmindedness. The former was lavish expenditure on worthy objects. It never entered the mind of the heathen thinker that the highest virtue could be

attainable by a poor man, not to speak of a slave; but he encouraged the rich to give liberally for public objects and especially for adorning the worship of the gods. The other chief virtue—highmindedness—is the state of mind of one who both deserves and claims the highest things; and, as there is nothing higher than honour, this is especially the aim of his ambition. The Aristotelian highmindedness is the self-consciousness of a great man, who walks among his fellow-creatures with nonchalance, not concerning himself about their observation or criticism, because he is aware of his own merit. This strain has been taken up in modern times by the German philosopher Nietzsche, who contrasts what he calls the morality of gentlemen with the morality of slaves, identifying the latter with Christianity.* But Thomas Aquinas was wise enough to see that both the supreme virtues of the ancient philosopher are capable of incorporation in the Christian system, though they

* Nietzsche is not without feeling for some of the ethical secrets of Jesus—for example, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—and these impart to his works whatever of ideality they possess; but he sinks down with fatal ease and frequency into mere paradox and violence. That which it is difficult for those living outside of Germany to understand is not his popularity with the masses, but the amount of attention paid to him by such scholars as Eucken and Häring; for his habit of thinking by the mere process of starting objections of all kinds to every accepted proposition is surely puerile and soon becomes wearisome.

may hold in it but a subordinate place. In the character and career of Jesus Himself, while the qualities that are "meek and lowly" were prominent, they had behind them qualities to which the very names of Aristotle's principal virtues might be applied; and this union is an essential feature of His whole history. For our sakes He became poor, but "He was rich"; He emptied Himself, but of what a fulness! His is a "glorious infamy"! The Byzantine conception of the "meek and lowly" Saviour, in its abjectness and hideousness, misses this side of the image and thereby becomes so untrue that even a protest as strong as Nietzsche's may have a relative justification.

In Christians, according to the directions of Jesus, there ought to be a consciousness having not a little in common with the highmindedness and magnificence of the ancient thinker. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; they are sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; they carry on their hearts the destiny of their fellow-creatures and strive to bring them up to the level of their own blessedness. In actual fact many of the followers of Christ have, in every generation, risen to this level; and some of the poorest and least considerable of them, as far as this world's means are concerned, have been invested with a dignity which has been sacerdotal and has extorted the involuntary homage of the world; for the restriction of the highest virtue to a

single class, and that the smallest, can have no force in the Christian fellowship.

Thus are there two opposite poles of Christian character—meekness and self-consciousness, lowliness and prodigality—and the link which binds them is Service—a watchword also prominent in the vocabulary of Jesus. The position of a servant is lowly, and his heart meek; for he looks up to those above him, and his excellence consists in remembering their interests and forgetting his own. Yet, on the other hand, a servant must have resources to be of value, and, the finer in quality and the ampler in quantity the benefits anyone is able to confer, the more is service redeemed from drudgery and raised to blessedness; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Therefore, Jesus advised those who heard Him to seek their satisfaction, not where the world seeks it, in being served, but in serving: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." It was for this reason that He commended children to their imitation, rebuking the rivalries of the Twelve by taking a little child and setting him in the midst of them. But His own example was constantly before their eyes: "I am among you as one that serveth." Such, He was conscious, had been His unvarying attitude all the time they had companied with Him, and such it was to be to the end, only with the meekness and lowliness always deepening and the benefits thereby accumulated on their heads

increasing in value; "for the Son of Man is come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The ethical qualities which we abstract from the life of Jesus and attempt to shape into a consistent image of human goodness are apt to stiffen in our hands into mere abstractions, with no personality behind them; and we sigh for those three splendid years when the Twelve actually walked the earth in company with Him who was all these forms of excellence in living flesh and blood. But the manhood of Jesus still exists and is, in essence, not different from what it was when it pervaded the fields of Galilee and moved in the streets of Jerusalem; and the spiritual presence, which is with us always and everywhere, according to His promise, is identified both with the glorified manhood now at God's right hand and with the bygone earthly life, the incidents of which have been preserved to us in the Gospels; so that a communion with Christ, wonderfully real and wonderfully similar to that enjoyed by the Twelve, is still accessible to those who covet it. There are men and women now breathing above ground who are more intimately acquainted with Jesus Christ than with any other friend, and these cannot but exhibit the influence of His character on their own.

THE CROSS AND OFFENCES

Matt. v. 10-12, 44.
viii. 20.
x. 16-25, 32, 35-39.
xi. 29, 30.
xiii. 21.
xvi. 24.
xix. 29.
xx. 22, 23.
xxi. 28-46.
xxiv. 9.

Mark iv. 17.
viii. 31, 34, 38.
ix. 12, 13, 31.
x. 21, 28-31, 33, 34.
xiii. 9, 12, 13.
xv. 34.

Luke vi. 22, 23.
ix. 22-27, 31, 44, 57-62.
xii. 4, 11, 12.
xiii. 24.
xiv. 25-35.
xvii. 25.
xxi. 12, 16-19.
xxiv. 17, 26.

Matt. v. 29, 30.
xi. 6.
xiii. 21, 41.
xvi. 23.
xvii. 27.
xviii.
xxiv. 10.
xxvi. 31.

Mark iv. 17.
vi. 3.
ix. 33-50.
xiii. 1-23.
xiv. 27, 38.

Luke vii. 23.
viii. 13.
xvii. 1-4.

CHAPTER X.

THE CROSS AND OFFENCES

AT present we are engaged in ascertaining the mind of our Lord as to the path which leads from unrighteousness to righteousness, and we have found the ascent thus far to consist of three steps: the first repentance; the second best expressed in His characteristic phrase "Come unto Me"; and the third best expressed in the equally characteristic word, "Follow Me." But this third step is almost invariably associated in our Lord's teaching with a reference to the Cross; and with this conception we must now occupy ourselves.

In evangelical preaching it is common to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God; and for doing so with overflowing affection and urgency there is high authority. But it is not impossible to carry this to excess, and to plead and press to a degree unworthy of the dignity of the Gospel. The Saviour Himself did not press any to follow Him unconditionally. On the contrary, He held some at arm's length; and some who pressed their fellowship upon Him He sent about their business. To one enthusiast He

said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." To a lukewarm heart, who asked, before following Him, to be allowed to go and say farewell to his friends, He answered, "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." But the harshest case of this kind was that of one who asked to be permitted first to go and bury his father; to whom Jesus made reply, "Let the dead bury their dead." The suggestion has been made that what was asked in this case was not time to go and bury a father already dead—which would only have occupied a few hours—but permission to wait till the father died and was buried. This would have been practically putting off Christ till the Greek Kalends. And, if the interpretation could be depended upon, it would certainly take off the edge of Christ's rebuke. The more obvious sense of the words is, however, in all probability the correct one; and the explanation of its harshness will be found only when we have settled upon an explanation of a tendency to an extreme use of hyperbole in which He frequently indulged.

He did not, then, wish to be followed merely because of an impulse of enthusiasm, nor did He press any unduly. On the contrary, He called upon all to sit down and count the cost, employing ludicrous images to depict what the consequences might be if they came after Him without doing so.

The figure cut by a man who, without calculation, begins to build a house but is not able to finish it, or by a general who with five thousand men goes to meet an enemy who comes against him with fifty thousand, is not more unenviable than may be that of the man who, under a sudden impulse towards religion, begins to follow Christ without sufficient reflection. Jesus never said that it is easy to be a Christian: He called men to follow Him; but He warned them that, if they did so, they would have to face a variety of hardships; and the name in His mouth for all these put together was the Cross.

So accustomed are we to the use of this term that the originality and the pathos of it in the mouth of Jesus may escape notice. As far as I am aware, it originated with Him; and it is interesting to consider out of what experience it arose. It is quite possible that, when very young, He may have witnessed the act of crucifixion, this punishment being common in Palestine. He may, as a boy, have followed the noisy crowd and watched the miserable victims on the way to execution. His sensitive soul would take in all the horror of this most ghastly of all punishments; but one trait of cruelty and scorn appears especially to have stung His imagination. This was the fact that from the place of detention to the place of execution the condemned man had, amid the laughter and jeers of the multitude, to carry on his own back the apparatus of his doom—an

indignity which, as far as I remember, is without a parallel. This burned in the memory of Jesus; and, when He required a name for all that can be imagined of shame and suffering, He said, "Let him take up his cross and follow Me."

It will occur to some readers that it was connected with the anticipation of His own death. The Gospels represent Him as foreseeing and predicting not only the fatal issue of the opposition He encountered, but likewise the manner of the same; and it is possible that the designation of the sufferings of His followers by the name of the cross may both confirm these predictions and carry them back to an earlier period of His ministry than the point at which the Synoptists report Him as beginning to refer to this subject. He may have meant that they were to be sharers in His sufferings, although I do not remember that He ever referred to the trials they were to endure as His cross. If we were satisfied that this was His meaning, we could hardly look upon it as a chance that, on the way to Calvary, when He turned out to be too weak to bear the heavy burden of His own cross, a passer-by was seized upon, by the soldiers—no doubt to the intense amusement and uproarious delight of the crowd—to carry the cross in His stead. We should, in that case, be almost driven to regard this as a symbolical incident; as, indeed, the victim of the soldier's joke appears himself to have found it; because in the narrative he is

referred to as "the father of Alexander and Rufus" —these being in all probability well-known Christian brethren—and it is very natural to suppose that the bearing of the visible cross by Simon led, in the providence of God, to his taking up the invisible one.*

Whether or not Jesus was thinking of His own sufferings when He first employed this name for the sufferings of His people, at all events the cross is, in its essence, the same to them as it was to Him; and it is by ascertaining what it was to Him that we ascertain what it is intended to be to all.

To Him it was two things—first, the last step of submission to His Father's will and, secondly, the last act of opposition to Him on the part of men. That which distinguished the man Christ Jesus from

* "When I was an object of much contempt and derision in the University, I strolled forth one day, buffeted and afflicted, with my little Greek Testament in my hand. I prayed earnestly to my God that He would comfort me with some cordial from His Word, and that, on opening the book, I might find some text which should sustain me. It was not for direction I was looking, for I am no friend to such superstitions as the *sortes Virgilianæ*, but only for support. The first text which caught my eye was this: 'They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear His cross.' You know, Simon is the same as Simeon. What a word of instruction was here, what a blessed hint for my encouragement! To have the cross laid upon me, that I might bear it after Jesus—what a privilege! It was enough. Now I could leap and sing for joy as one whom Jesus was honouring with a participation of His sufferings."—BISHOP MOULE'S *Charles Simeon*, p. 72.

all the other children of men was, that at every step He perfectly fulfilled the will of God. But God's will was not to Him, any more than to the other sons of Adam, easy of fulfilment. It led Him in a way that was very strait and that, as He advanced, became dark and intricate, till He cried out that He whose will He had ever followed had forsaken Him. In Gethsemane He groaned amidst His tears, "Not My will, but Thine be done," and the next and last step was the cross. Such was the cross from one point of view. From another it was the last act of human opposition. Jesus was the brotherliest of all the sons of men, and He went about continually doing good. He might have been the lord and master, but He made Himself the servant of all. From which it follows, that, if there were reason in human conduct, He ought to have been the most popular and best-beloved of the species. But there is a strange twist in the human mind, which makes it often hostile to its best benefactors; and so He was despised and rejected; and they hated Him without a cause. Month after month this grew worse and worse, and the climax was the cross.

Now, what the cross was to Him, such also is it to those who follow Him. First, it is the pain involved in doing the will of God. "Whoso doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My mother and sister and brother." This is the path for all disciples; but for them, being what

they are, it cannot be an easy one; because their thoughts are not God's thoughts nor their ways His ways. Accordingly, they have to give up their own thoughts, ways and wills. But what are a man's thoughts, ways and will but himself? So that he has to give up himself. Thus exactly did Jesus read the case, when He said, "Let him deny himself"; and, because the occasions for such self-sacrifice are occurring every hour, he added "daily." "Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." On the other hand, it is for them also a general name for the opposition of the world. If Christians are like their Master, they will be benefactors of their species, and in many different forms and tones He charges them to be so. It might be expected to follow that they would be popular with the public, to whose welfare they are prepared to sacrifice their own ease and substance. But Jesus did not expect this: on the contrary, He told them, "Ye shall be hated of all men." The same perversity which made Him the mark for the hostility of those for whom He was ready to die would operate to similar effects, in their experience. "The disciple," said He, "is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?"

Such was the essence of the cross, and such is

its essence in all generations. As for its forms, these were, according to the testimony of Christ, to be very various. One form in which He saw it impending was the disruption of families—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." To one who revered the family as Jesus did, such a prospect must have been an appalling one; but He perceived that the path to the regeneration of the world passed this way, and He made up His mind for the inevitable. Then, as the scope of the movement inaugurated by Him widened, it would come into collision with the powers of the State; and He foresaw and foretold, what actually came to pass, that prosecutions would rage, in which the faithful would have to stand before kings and councils; and many would suffer punishment, some even being crucified as He was to be Himself.

The reason why the religion of Jesus was thus to come into collision with existing institutions lay in its propagandist genius.* In its very nature it is a light which must shine; and it is the will of its Author that it should do so. To no follower of His, therefore, could He spare the exertion of

* "Hostility to the world was not required of the votaries of ancient faiths."—Strong, *Christian Ethics*, p. 131.

bearing testimony on behalf of his religion, though in multitudes of cases this must be one of the severest of crosses. "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in heaven." Jesus did not, like Mohammed, call upon those who followed Him to draw the sword and conquer the world; but He called on them to do that which is more perilous—to conquer the world without a sword. The Christianization of the world was imposed by Jesus as a task on all His followers; and what a task it is! It involves the redressing of ancient wrongs, the uprooting of evil customs, the overthrow of obnoxious institutions. And none of these things can be done without exciting opposition; for the abuses to be reformed are supported by public opinion and in many cases by the law of the land; men have their interests vested in them, and assuredly will not yield without a struggle. The deeper any disciple's sympathy with the aims of the Saviour, the heavier is his cross; because the sight of a perishing world will torture him, the aspects of abounding iniquity will distress him, the slow progress of goodness will madden him, the failure of his own attempts to do good will haunt him; and he will often be driven in desperation to cast his burden on the Lord in prayer.

But, although Christ never concealed the cross,

He did not doubt that it was wise to carry it; because the compensation would be far beyond the sacrifice. Not infrequently have self-denial and self-sacrifice been spoken of as if they were good in themselves, apart from any ulterior advantage. But there is no such affectation in the words of Christ. Pain is pain; it is the natural instinct of man to avoid it; and it is folly to incur it, when this can be helped, unless thereby a proportionate good is to be obtained—or rather a pleasure excelling the pain, a gain in excess of the outlay. To this principle of common sense Jesus was absolutely loyal.

Sometimes, indeed, His appeal was, in the first place, to the heart: He simply intimated, in speaking of the cross which those who followed Him would have to bear, that it was to be borne for His sake, as if no more required to be said. Sometimes He points to His own example, as in the words already quoted, "The servant is not above his master; it is enough that the servant be as his master." And sometimes He appealed to the example of the prophets, assuring His followers that, the more they sacrificed in the cause, the higher would they be advanced in the company of the heroes: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." But the

appeal was oftener to the head than to the heart. The intellectual appeal occurs in many forms; but the following is the most characteristic: "For, whosoever shall save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." He admits that to take up the cross is equivalent to the losing of one's life; and this may mean of course that it will involve sudden and violent death: as much as this it has meant in innumerable cases. But life may be said to be lost when that is lost which makes it pleasant and enjoyable. And it is pleasant to follow one's own will and wishes; it is pleasant to sail with the tide, to have no scruples about the aims which the majority are following, and to be burdened with no principles which the majority disapprove. Sin is pleasant, casting over existence a many-coloured glare of excitement and allowing free play to the strongest passions. All this is lost by following Christ. On the contrary, by refusing to follow Him life is saved. The tears of repentance and the reproaches of conscience are saved; the scorn of the world and the charge of strictness and singularity are saved; anxiety and exertion for the salvation of others are saved, the world being left to go its own way and to be happy or miserable, virtuous or vicious, as it can or will. All this Jesus conceded; and yet He held that he who saves his life in this way loses it, and he who loses it saves it. Does this mean that, although he saves it in this

world, he will lose it in the world to come, and that if he loses it in this world, he will save it in the world to come? Certainly it includes this—the words have just been quoted, "Great is your reward in heaven"—and this is no small part of Christ's thought. But it is not the whole of it. He meant that, even in this world, those who save their life by refusing to follow Him lose it, and those who lose it for His sake save it. This is proved by the remarkable words in Luke xviii. 29, 30: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or parents or brethren or wife or children for the kingdom of God's sake who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting"—a saying the full scope of which is not easily put into words. But it at least means this: that the happiness sacrificed is a mean one and the happiness gained a noble one; or, happiness is lost, but blessedness is won.

Such truths lie very near the centre of the teaching of Jesus. Yet we cannot forget that the history of the Church for fifteen hundred years has been darkened by a misapprehension of this class of sayings; for it is on such sayings of our Lord that the institution of monasticism is founded, which has flourished for so many centuries and is still absorbing the lives and energies of multitudes of men and women in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. And, while not withholding from many who have sacrificed their lives on this altar a measure

of admiration for their self-control, their moral courage and their services to the suffering and the ignorant, we cannot but look upon the system as a terrible delusion, which warns us how even the best teaching in the world may be distorted into error.

The prime mistake of monasticism is, that it makes self-denial an end in itself, whereas Jesus made it only a means to an end. Its three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience dishonour things that are great gifts of God and crush sentiments with which God is well pleased. It withdraws from the service of the world multitudes who are needed to elevate its ordinary life and discharge its necessary work, consigning them to a solitude which, it is to be feared, is often the reverse of what it is intended to be. It gives to officials a power over their fellows which no mere man should possess, and breaks down in the rank and file that power of personal choice which is the very mainspring of the moral life. In a book on the Ethical Teaching of Jesus, to which reference was made on an earlier page*—the book of a thorough materialist, writing for the Socialist masses of Germany—the teaching of Jesus on this subject is, without hesitation or discussion, identified with the teaching of the Church; and this is the worst feature of the whole case—that Jesus is made responsible for sentiments which are utterly at variance with His own; and thereby multitudes of

* Rau, *Die Ethik Jesu.*

human souls are repelled from Him as a teacher whom they cannot trust.

There is another side of the teaching of our Lord on this subject with which is connected a word that is almost as much a *vox signata* in His vocabulary as the word Cross itself. This is the word Offence or Offences. In ordinary parlance "offence" means insult or displeasure; but, in the mouth of Jesus, its meaning is a technical one: it signifies temptation. To offend anyone is to draw him away from discipleship and make him a backslider. The original is "scandal"; and the Greek word * meant literally the upright stick in a trap, to which the bait was attached, and which, when touched, caused the trap to close over the animal. Offences are traps to entice and betray unwary disciples; they are stumbling-blocks laid in the path that leads to Christ and heaven, in order to make those who would follow Christ lose their way. But the point to be specially noted is, that the objects designated by the word "offences" in the mouth of Christ are precisely the same as those included under the term "cross." The cross, in Christ's vocabulary, is a comprehensive term for everything that makes it difficult to obey the call to follow Him, and the word "offences" covers the same class of objects: the

* σκάνδαλον for σκανδάληθρον.

difference being this, that these difficulties are called by the one name when anyone is suffering from them, but by the other when anyone is causing others to suffer from them.

To bear the cross is an honour, but to give offence is a crime. In the eyes of Jesus this was a sin of unspeakable horror, as may be inferred from these words in which He spoke of it: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

The discourse in which Jesus expressed His full mind on the subject of offences is not so well known as it deserves to be; and many who read it do not perceive how far down the chapter the subject is carried: it is supposed that He has finished with this topic and passed on to others, when in reality He is still pursuing the same train of thought. It is reported in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew; and it is worthy of notice that, while delivering it, Jesus was in an extraordinary attitude: He had a child all the time standing at His knee. This was one of His disciples; for then, as now, not a few of His most affectionate and loyal followers were children. Embracing him, then, with His knees, touching him with His fingers, hanging over him with an air of protection—"as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"—He deprecated the

attempts of the ruthless and heartless to offend such—that is, to pluck them out of His hands and withdraw them from His discipleship. In this situation, the flow of His thoughts took a wide sweep, but the following were His principal ideas.

First, in order to bring out the diabolical nature of offences, He contrasts those who indulge in them with all that is heavenly. Thus, the angels are protectors of those who follow Christ: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven": that is to say, they occupy the front rank, and stand nearest the divine presence. It is not by the humblest but the highest angels that the interests of the little ones among Christ's followers are guarded. But this conduct on the part of angels is only an imitation of that of the Lord of angels: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish": it may be the will of those who offend them, but it is the sheer opposite of the will of God. If this is true of the Father, it is no less true of the Son; "for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Probably these words were spoken by Jesus also on other occasions, but there is an obvious propriety in their occurrence here *; because there could be nothing in more absolute contradiction with the whole aim and drift of the life of Christ than the conduct of those who offend

* Reading, however, doubtful.

His followers—that is, endeavour to turn them back from the way of salvation.

There are two forms which offences may assume. First, the blow may be delivered in the region of the intellect by the arguments of an enemy, who confuses the mind of the disciple, shaking his confidence in the Saviour or instilling false views in place of the pure truth as it is in Jesus. Again and again did Jesus warn His followers against such false prophets. They would come, He said, "in sheep's clothing"—that is, with captivating words and elegance of manners, with lofty professions of sincerity and airs of impartiality—"but inwardly they are ravening wolves." It is often taken for granted that the dissemination of religious opinions is free, of whatever nature these may be; but to assume this is to confuse freedom towards men with freedom towards God. As regards men, all have the right to the free expression of opinion; but, as regards God, there is no responsibility more grave; and the publication of opinions by which faith is shaken or morality undermined, if the motive be one of levity or vanity or self-interest, is one of the gravest of crimes. If the motive be a conscientious one, still the injury may be grave, and the case may be too intricate for human decision; but God will judge it.*

* Herrmann (*Ethik*, p. 70) shows how, by the sophistries of what he calls Eudæmonistic Ethics, the pain of an awakened conscience may be dulled, and so the soul turned aside from

The other form of offence is one less difficult to judge; for it is the rude and reckless attempt to stifle religion in the birth by laughter and scorn, or by any of the many other concrete forms of persecution. So malignant and diabolical is such conduct, that it might be supposed to be rare in the world, or confined to heathen and barbarous states of society. But to suppose so is to be very ignorant of human nature and of the actual world in which we live; the fact being that few begin to walk in the narrow way without a deliberate attempt being made by some emissary of the Tempter to turn them back.*

So formidable were the words of Jesus on this subject that they struck a responsive chord in one sensitive heart in His audience. The Apostle John interrupted the discourse with the remark, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us."

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seeking that refuge to which it is being driven by its despair. This author is very clear and firm on the contrast between Philosophical and Christian Ethics at the critical point—where, in Christian experience, pessimism passes into optimism.

* For an instance of this, the subsequent effects of which were tragic, see the story, in Dr. John Paton's *Autobiography*, of the convert Mungaw, whom the missionary took with him to Australia, as a specimen of the work of the mission, but whom some white men there got hold of, in the missionary's absence, and initiated so well into their own sins, that he became not only a backslider, but a maniac, causing endless trouble when he returned to the Islands.

To the unstudious reader it may appear that this was an irrelevant remark ; but there had shot across the mind of the sensitive apostle a fear lest, in this case, they had quenched the zeal of one who might be reckoned among the little ones to whom Jesus had so feelingly referred. And it is noteworthy that Jesus did not good-naturedly calm the disciple's apprehensions, but, on the contrary, gave him to understand that these were justified, and cautioned him against the repetition of his mistake. Thus it would appear that even disciples, or even apostles, may offend, an excessive zeal for that company of Christ's followers to which they themselves belong leading them to disown other followers of the same Master who may belong to a different company, or an undue importance attached to order and decorum betraying them into harshness towards a beginner who has a little outrun discretion, but who has begun earnestly to bear witness to the same Lord.

Having thus made the Twelve aware that even they were not out of danger, He followed up the impression with a still more interior and subtle caution. Even when nothing positive is done to cause a brother to stumble, the law of love may be transgressed by merely keeping at a distance from one who has fallen. When anyone who has made a profession draws back or by some glaring act of inconsistency brings dishonour on the cause, the temptation is strong to leave him alone ; indeed,

it may be a reproach to have anything to do with him. Many a backslider has been made to feel this, and the coldness of his former associates has driven him farther away. But Jesus will not have it. He supposes an extreme case—one in which the fall of a backslider has been a wrong inflicted on yourself. Even in such circumstances you must not forsake him, but go and tell him his fault, first between you and him alone; then, if this fail, in the presence of witnesses; you must leave no stone unturned to regain the erring brother. For it is the soul—the priceless soul—that is at stake; and to contribute to the loss of it, even by neglect, is at the opposite extreme from the spirit and the mission of Jesus.

Our Lord, however, did not conclude His reflections on this dark subject without turning out its sunny side, reminding His hearers that, in many ways, they might do the reverse of offending His little ones, and that anything done to protect these from offence, to cheer them under discouragement, and to send them on their way rejoicing would be acceptable in the eyes of Heaven. Such was the thought He expressed in language of inimitable loveliness, when He thus brought the discourse on offences to a close: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Thus have we concluded the portion of our subject, under the title of Virtue, which is the most characteristic in the teaching of Jesus. The earlier portion, under the title of the Highest Good, sets forth the supreme aim of the Christian life; and the portion still to come, under the title of Duty, will describe the several steps in the path; but this one deals with the internal force by which the steps are to be taken and the end finally secured.

As we look back on the teaching of Jesus under this head, we perceive that its peculiarity consists in deriving this strength from Himself. More and more He puts Himself into the centre; and it is by connection with Him that the end is to be achieved. Under a variety of forms He calls upon those who would accept His guidance to attach themselves to Himself—to turn away from other masters, to come to Him, to follow Him. And not only were they thus instructed to find their salvation by allowing themselves to be drawn closer and closer to His person, as long as He was there with them; but, when He left them, they were to watch for His reappearing. Watchfulness was one of the keynotes of His instruction; and it meant the preoccupation of the mind with His person. The great event of the future was to be their meeting with Him again; and, as His return might take place at any moment—at midnight, or at cock-

crowing, or in the morning—they must not sleep, as do others, but watch and be sober.

All this was very simple, when He was there before their eyes, or when they still might expect Him to return to the earth in their own generation. But the teaching of Jesus was for all generations, and in every generation His disciples must be able to translate the essence of it into forms suitable to their altered circumstances. Connection with His person, preoccupation with His image, and the anticipation of future union with Him will always be the essentials of Christian experience; and in these is generated the virtue on which the moral victory depends.

PART THIRD

DUTY

THE LOVE OF GOD

Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 33-37; vi. 9, 10; vii. 21; xii. 50; xvi. 23; xxii. 21, 37, 40.
Mark viii. 33; xii. 28-34.
Luke vii. 40-50; x. 28; xi. 42; xii. 5; xvii. 17-19; xviii. 2, 4; xx. 25; xxi. 1-4.

Matt. v. 8, 9, 16, 45, 48; vi. 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 24, 26, 30, 32; vii. 11, 21; ix. 38; x. 20, 28, 29, 32, 33, 40; xi. 25-27; xii. 4, 28, 31, 32, 50; xiii. 43; xv. 3, 4, 6, 13; xvi. 17, 27; xviii. 10, 14, 19, 23-35; xix. 4-6, 17, 24, 26; xx. 23; xxi. 13, 42; xxii. 29-32, 42-45; xxiii. 9, 21, 22; xxiv. 36; xxvi. 29, 39; xxviii. 19.
Mark i. 14, 15; ii. 26; vii. 8, 9, 13; viii. 33, 38; ix. 37; x. 6, 9, 23, 24, 27; xi. 22-26; xiii. 19, 20, 32; xiv. 25, 36; xv. 34.
Luke iv. 4, 8, 12; vi. 20, 35, 36; viii. 10, 11, 39; x. 2, 21, 22; xi. 2-4, 13, 20, 28, 42, 49; xv. 1-32; xviii. 2, 4, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 27, 29; xx. 25, 36-38, 41-44; xxi. 1-4; xxiii. 34, 46.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LOVE OF GOD

JESUS has Himself made it easy to render an account of His teaching on the subject of Duty —or rather Duties, for which the term employed by Him was Commandments—by His answer to the question, once propounded to Him, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," was His reply, "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

As is well known, Jesus did not Himself invent these two commandments. He found them both in the Law of Moses, the one occurring in Deut. vi. 5 and the other in Lev. xix. 18. Whenever it was possible, He preferred, instead of inventing new

* Some hold that in this great saying a third kind of love is included—that of self. So Harless, *System of Christian Ethics*, p. 17: "Self-love is presupposed as the natural basis by which man is enabled to understand the manner and measure of love for his neighbour also."

forms, to make use of the materials furnished to His hand in the ancient Scriptures and institutions of His race; and there is sometimes more originality displayed in thus recovering an old thing, translating it, and stamping it with fresh honour, than in inventing one absolutely new.

To these two precepts He gave an entirely novel significance when, picking them out of the mass of Old Testament precepts in which they were embedded—and, one may even say, lost—He elevated them to shine forever as the sun and the moon of the firmament of duty. And, at the same time, He immensely simplified morality. In the Old Testament there were such multitudes of commandments that the conscience was perplexed among them; and the confusion was worse confounded by the subtleties of the rabbis, who, in their zeal to put, as they phrased it, a hedge about the Law, had split up every commandment into a dozen or a score. Then they exercised their ingenuity in determining which of these belonged to the first, which to the second rank of importance, and so on. It is not certain whether it was in this logic-chopping spirit that the scribe came to Jesus who asked which was the greatest of all the commandments. The question may be a very trivial, but it may also be a very solemn one. If prompted not by curiosity but by conscience, it may be an inquiry as to what it is that really matters in the eyes of God—ap-

proaching near to what is intended when in our own day it is asked what it is that makes a Christian, and not differing much from the most earnest of all questions, "What must I do to be saved?" Perhaps we ought to do the man the honour of attributing to him the deeper intention, although he came on the scene at first as an interrupter and enemy of Jesus; because it is manifest that the reply of Jesus lifted him completely off his feet, causing him to dissociate himself from his comrades and to acknowledge, in a tone of irrepressible enthusiasm, "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth; for there is one God; and there is none other but He; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." As Jesus said about him, he was "not far from the kingdom of God": he was a man of sense, accessible to conviction; and the moral grandeur of the law of duty, as it was placed before him by Jesus, converted him into a confessor of the truth. The confusion in which he had been involved by the logomachies of his tribe melted away, and he rose up to embrace the moral idea in its simplicity: not only all duty being reduced to two commandments, but these two hemispheres being shown to have a common centre; for the centre of both is love. Yet, though simple, this principle is perfectly sufficient: every wrong

done to our neighbour is obviously due to lack of love; for, if we loved him enough, how could we wrong him? and, in like manner, every sin against God is a wrong done to Him of which we could not be guilty if we loved Him sufficiently. On the other hand, without love, what are duties worth? As the Teacher said, "on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Duty is a chain of many links, suspended from these two opposite staples.

How original the commandment to love God is may be illustrated by a remark of Aristotle. "Love to God," he observes, "does not exist: it is absurd to talk of such a thing; for God is an unknowable being." * Such was the extent of the insight in such matters of even so wise a heathen; and to the present day philosophy has adhered too faithfully to this tradition, the love of God being a duty of which most systems of Moral Philosophy have not the faintest inkling. † In this respect philosophy has remained pagan, at least in our own country, not rising above the sentiment of the man in the street, who would treat the suggestion of any such duty as an hallucination and a banality. ‡

* *Magn. Moral.* ii. 11.

† Compare the closing pages of Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.*

‡ Of this there is a well-known instance in a saying preserved of the English statesman Pitt. Chancing to visit a church in which a sermon had been preached by one of the apostles of

When the statesman Wilberforce, in his book entitled *A Practical View*, was contrasting the religion prevalent among the higher ranks of society with the religion of the Bible, he fastened on this as the point at which he could most easily demonstrate how far fashionable religion came short of the standard; and he could appeal to what was a fact of general knowledge when he stated that, in the circles for whose benefit he was writing, any expressions of love to God would be regarded as symptoms of odious fanaticism; multitudes of the most cultivated people in England believing themselves to be religious enough, though ready to confess that they possessed nothing of the kind.* In opposition to these prejudices he proved, in this epoch-making work, that love to God holds a prominent place in Scripture, and especially in the teaching of Jesus; and he went on to plead for what he called the presence of the passions in religion on two grounds —first, because the passions require the control of

the Evangelical Revival, the doctrines of which were then only beginning to be heard of, he bounced out, at the close of the service, exclaiming in high dudgeon, "Why, the fellow expects us to love God!"

* Observe with what timidity Bishop Butler, a representative of the preceding generation, in his Two Sermons on the Love of God, approaches anything which might be characterized as enthusiasm, and how soon he sinks down from any warmth of feeling towards the Deity into contentment with the course of Providence, putting off to a future state all demonstrations of anything like lively affection.

religion, and, secondly, because religion requires the glow and the force which only the passions can supply, to enable it to carry out its difficult tasks. Since the time of Wilberforce, sentiment on this subject has greatly altered. Emotional fervour in religion is now cultivated by the most fastidious; the spirit of prayers and hymns has become warmer; and the level of feeling above which the tone of the pulpit was never formerly allowed to rise would in our day be considered intolerably frigid. Above all, we now possess a far better psychology of religion. In the highest philosophical circles it is beginning to be recognised that man is a religious being, and that without the cultivation of his religious nature his development is stunted and mutilated.* Hence it is coming to be not only a dictum of religion but a postulate of philosophy, that, as the human heart is capable of putting forth divers blossoms of love towards human beings, each of which makes life richer and society more humane, so love to God is a capability of the heart the influence of which, when it comes to fruition, cannot but be deep and transforming; whereas a member of the human family who does not love God is lacking in one of the functions of a complete humanity.

From the nature of the case it follows that, if

* In the recognition of this, American thinkers, like Royce and James, have given a praiseworthy lead.

the love of God is natural to man, it ought to be a supreme passion ; for not only is God the supreme good, the source of all beauty and excellence, but we ourselves are of Him ; He is our Creator, our Providence and our Saviour. With this corresponds the sweeping demand made in the commandment adopted by Jesus as His own : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

In these terms some interpreters have recognised the language of a primitive psychology, an attempt at a threefold or a fourfold division of human nature ; "soul" referring to emotion, "mind" to intellect, and "strength" to will. But, whatever may be thought of this suggestion, it is manifest that the words are intended to claim for God the affection of human nature in all its extent and in all its intensity.

The fact that this commandment was fetched by Jesus out of the Old Testament reminds us that between His teaching and that of the Old Testament on this subject there is not the same contrast as between the Gospel and philosophy. It is astonishing to what a warmth and intensity of feeling towards the Divine Being some of the spirits of the Old Testament were able to rise. More than one of the psalmists say in so many words : "I love the Lord" ; and there is no reason to doubt that in the centuries of Hebrew history there were many hearts able

to adopt as their own such passionate appeals to the Deity as, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth whom I desire besides Thee" Still, the average sentiment of the pious Israelite towards his Divinity was fear; and from the Wisdom Literature it may be gathered that for centuries the commonest name for religion was "the fear of the Lord." So far from dissociating Himself from this conception of religion, Jesus, as has been already pointed out, distinctly acknowledges its validity in such a saying as this: "Fear Him who, when He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." There may have been other sentiments towards the Deity, appropriate to an earlier stage of development, which Jesus acknowledged; for it cannot be recalled too often that He came not to destroy but to fulfil. But now all other sentiments were to be subordinate; and love was to take its place both as the force to drive and the wisdom to guide along the pathway of progress and perfection.

Important, however, as was the service rendered by Jesus to Ethics when He rescued the commandment to love God from its obscure place in the Pentateuch and emphasized it in His teaching in the manner described, this was not His weightiest contribution to the subject. Merely to reiterate the commandment to love God, in however imperative

or insistent a voice this may be done, does not, after all, help much: it does not make it any easier to fulfil the commandment or make it likely that many will try to obey it. There is only one way of making a commandment to love easier: namely, by exhibiting the object of love in a more attractive light. And this was the great contribution of Jesus to this primary duty of morality: He made God far more lovable than He had ever appeared before. To prove this, it will be necessary to indicate the character of God, as it appears in the teaching of Christ, contrasting it with earlier revelations.

First, the God of Jesus is a God known. The reason assigned by Aristotle for the assertion that God cannot be loved is that He is unknown; and, perhaps, when the knowledge accessible to the heathen philosopher is taken into consideration, this position cannot be condemned as unreasonable. Some, however, at the present day have advanced no further: while not categorically asserting that there is no God, they hold that the knowable is confined to the tangible or sensible, and that what lies beyond is out of reach of our faculties. Even those who acknowledge the existence of God differ among themselves as to the faculty by which He is apprehended, some assuming Him to be an object of immediate intuition, while others infer His existence and attributes as the result of a long and cumbrous process of reasoning. The controversy

about the value and cogency of the evidences of the divine existence has been prolonged and intricate, and it appears to be interminable. But Jesus makes use of no such proofs. He moves in a region of absolute certainty, speaking of God with the confidence of one who possesses the most intimate relations with Him: "No man knoweth the Son save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." He never makes the demonstration of the existence of God any part of His vocation; although many occupants of Christian pulpits and chairs have won great renown by such evidences. On the contrary, He assumed that the organ by which God is apprehended is different from intellect, when He said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see their God"; and He confirmed the impression that, according to His view, the knowledge of God is peculiarly the perquisite of the simple and the pure, when He said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Secondly, the God of Jesus is the God of nature. Of course in this He was not original; but His exhibition of God in this light was singularly attractive. While philosophers jangle about the process by which the knowledge of God is attainable, if He can be known at all, the common man has in all

ages been satisfied with the testimony borne to an Almighty Hand by the spectacle of the actual world. That the picture of glory spread out before his eyes in heaven and earth has had no painter is to him incredible. That the gigantic machine of the universe, working so smoothly and uniformly, of which every part is so nicely balanced, has had no contriver seems to him absurd. Lord Bacon uttered the sentiment of the common heart grandly, when he said, "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Alcoran than that this universal frame is without a mind." This was the sentiment of Jesus; only it was more with the eye of the poet than of the logician that He looked on nature. His delight in natural beauty was deep and rejoicing; to His mind the energy which pervades nature, working out its ceaseless changes and developing its beauties, was nothing else than the intelligent and loving care of God. We may suppose Jesus, especially in the days of His youth and amid the rural scenery of Nazareth, to have enjoyed a profound felicity in communion with the sights and sounds of the changing aspects of the beautiful country of which He was a child; and it was out of deep wells of observation and experience that He was able to dispense the wisdom thus accumulated when He began to preach. He opened the eyes of His hearers to the vision He had Himself seen; and the lesson which He deduced from the aspects

of nature was one of childlike and perfect faith in Providence. With what a pomp of glorious words He described the beauty of the flowers of the field! and the conclusion he drew from it was this: "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" In like manner He described the feeding of the fowls of the air, and then added: "Are not ye much better than they?" Such was the optimistic faith of Jesus, which dropped like dew from heaven on the hearts of His hearers, enabling the sons and daughters of toil to lift up their heads and recognise in the sights and sounds around them the self-revelation of a wisdom and goodness immeasurable.

Thus did He teach the lesson of trust and cheerfulness. In nature, however, there are not only sunny skies and golden crops, but storms, earthquakes, pestilences, and many other forms of calamity. Of a hundred seeds only one comes to fruitage; in the depths of the forest and in the depths of the ocean the large and the strong creatures prey on the small and the weak; on a winter's day the birds lie dead by every hedgerow; so that it is possible to represent nature as a kind of shambles or field of battle, reeking with the gore of never-ceasing slaughter. Still darker are the shadows in human existence, the cries of misery being sometimes so loud and piercing that it is little wonder if sensitive hearts

question whether there can really be a divine mind that sees and knows. The view taken of such things by Jesus appears to have been that we know enough of the bright side to be able to trust God with the dark one. The sparrow falls; but God is by, and sees it when it falls. This is enough. Jesus refused to subscribe to the ancient opinion, with which Job had been tortured, that calamity must necessarily be the punishment of special sins. The eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell had not been sinners above all who dwelt at Jerusalem, although they had suffered such things; their fate had, indeed, been obscure; but there is a day of revelation coming when all such mysteries shall be unsealed. Why does the Pharisee, offering up in public his hypocritical prayers, receive the praise of the world and the good things of this life, whereas the saint, praying in obscurity, attracts no notice? "Your Father," answers Jesus, "who seeth in secret, Himself will reward him openly." "There are first which shall be last, and the last first." The calamities of His own life far exceeded the common lot in their mystery and bewilderment; and so far did He succumb as for a moment to cry out, on the cross, that His God had forsaken Him; but the cloud passed, and He died with the serene accents of faith on His lips: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Thirdly, the God of Jesus is the God of history and of Scripture. The attempt has sometimes been made

to represent Jesus as a cosmopolitan, to whom nothing human was alien but to whom everything local and national was indifferent, if not despicable. But this is a notion caught out of the air and bearing no relation to facts. Not only did others call Him the Son of David, but He Himself betrayed in many ways His identification with the seed of Abraham. One of His favourite names for God was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He wept over Jerusalem with the ardour of a patriot. He gave as a reason for having compassion on a woman that she was a daughter of Abraham; and He brought salvation to the house of Zacchæus avowedly on the ground that he was a son of Abraham. So imbued was He with the literature of the Old Testament that He thought in its imagery and spoke in its nomenclature. He identified His own work with that of the prophets, of which it was the continuation and fulfilment; and the names of the heroes and the heroines of Hebrew history were familiar in His mouth as household words. All attempts, in short, to establish an antagonism between the God of the Old Testament and the God of Jesus Christ may without hesitation be pronounced at variance with the spirit of the Great Teacher. To Him all the stages of revelation preceding His own—not only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but the Jehovah of Moses, the Lord of Hosts of Joshua, the Holy One of Israel of Isaiah, and whatever other designations for the object of

human reverence had been produced in the past—were welcome and venerable; and He did not supersede or satirise or oppose them, as has too frequently been done in His name, but cherished them all.

Fourthly, the God of Jesus was the heavenly Father. "My Father" He habitually called Him; "your Father" He denominated Him when speaking to others; and He taught them to pray to Him as "our Father."

Not only is the application of the title Father to the Deity not confined to the New Testament, but it is not even limited to Holy Writ, it being no unusual occurrence in heathen poetry to address the Supreme Being as the Father of gods and men. In the Old Testament, of course, the application to God of this name is common enough; but the difference, it is said, is, that in the Old Testament God is the Father of the nation, whereas in the New He is the Father of the individual; and, speaking broadly, we may recognise this distinction as correct. Yet in the Old Testament a tendency is already discernible to apply the term to the relationship of God to the individual; as when, for instance, in Psalm ciii., it is said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." And in the Old Testament Apocrypha we find the transition already completed. Thus, in Ecclesiasticus,* the

* xxiii. 1, 4.

author addresses God as the Father and Master of his life; and in the Wisdom of Solomon * the wicked accuse the godly man of boasting that God is his Father. † It may be assumed that, before the teaching of Jesus began to tell, His countrymen occasionally spoke of God as their Father not only in their collective but in their individual capacity. But Jesus made the practice current and universal. And there was another great difference: if the individual Israelite ventured to call God his Father, it was in the consciousness of being himself a portion of Israel; he never thought of sonship as extending beyond the bounds of the holy nation. But in the teaching of Jesus this distinction disappeared, every human being who chooses being entitled to call God by this name.

The question has, indeed, been raised whether, in the teaching of Jesus, God is the Father of all men as such, or only of those men and women who have been brought into a new relationship to Him through Christ. The latter alternative has been maintained by theologians—that there is no fatherhood of God to any except such as have been reconciled to Him in Christ. But this view seems to be decisively set aside by the parable of the Prodigal Son. Whatever estimate be made of the Prodigal in the far country, he certainly does not stand for those who have

* ii. 16.

† Compare Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, i 6.

been reconciled to God through Christ; but just as certainly he is still a son. His father has not forgotten or disowned him but, on the contrary, is more tenderly and keenly conscious of His relationship to him because he is lost. The very point of the parable lies in the fact that the lostness of the son, so far from annihilating the relationship, makes the father more conscious of it than ever: his lost son being far more in his thoughts than the one who has never been lost. This certainly is one of the brightest and most attractive features of the divine fatherhood in the teaching of Jesus, and it must not be sacrificed in deference to any theological prepossession. Nevertheless, we are warned against dogmatizing in the opposite direction by the fact that Jesus not infrequently speaks of divine sonship as something to be only gradually attained even by those who are His own disciples. Thus, these are told by Him to love their enemies, that they may be—or rather that they may become *—the sons of their Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Sonship here is a matter not of natural relationship, but of moral attainment, and its development is gradual. Still more significant is the statement that no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him—where it seems to be

* ὅπως γένησθε.

claimed that the power of calling God Father belongs to those alone who have learned it from Christ. And, although it is difficult, in reading our Lord's sayings, as they have come down to us, to determine always whether, when speaking to His hearers of their heavenly Father, He was addressing the narrow circle of the disciples or the wider one of the multitude, yet, on the whole, the impression produced is that usually, when speaking of God as Father, He was addressing those who had learned from Himself. At all events it is manifest that, the wider the extension of the divine fatherhood, the less deep must be its intention: that is to say, if He is the Father of all, His fatherhood means less to each of them than if He is the Father of those only who cherish towards Him filial affection and resemble Him in character. But there is nothing in what we know of Jesus as a teacher to make us think that He might not have employed the term sometimes in the one sense and sometimes in the other. Jesus made the name of Father current coin, making offer of it to every human being and breaking down the monopoly of the Jew; but the new revelation of the character of God, by which love is to be made easy, does not consist merely in the use of this name, but rather in the consciousness of what, as Father, He has done and is prepared to do for those who are His children.†

† "Mit Recht bemerkt O. Holtzmann, dass der Gottvaterglaube uns nirgends in der Lehre Jesu im Gegensatz gegen einen

By modern theologians it is usually taken for granted that the fatherhood of God, being so prominent in the teaching of Jesus, must be the ultimate expression for the divine love. At an earlier stage of revelation, the relation of Jehovah to Israel was represented under a different figure of speech—that of husband and wife—which is to be found in many parts of the Old Testament, but culminates in the prophet Hosea. Both the one representation and the other are tender and significant, yet they differ widely from each other, fatherhood being more absolutely natural and more enduring, whereas the other relationship has in it more of choice and was

anderen Gottesgedanken scharf ausgestaltet entgegentrete, und dass er überhaupt dem Judenthum gegenüber nichts Neues war. Dieser letzteren Behauptung könnte man entgegenhalten, dass die Beziehung der Vaterliebe Gottes auf den einzelnen Menschen doch neu ist. Allein wir vernehmen nicht, dass Jesus in dieser Beziehung einen Unterschied zwischen seiner Weise den Vater zu verkündigen und der alttestamentlichen hervorgehoben hätte, oder dass seine Zuhörer sich veranlasst gefühlt hätten, es zu thun. Nicht hier liegt die eigentliche Originalität der Gottvaterverkündigung Jesu. Sie liegt vielmehr darin, dass durch die ganze Predigt Jesu sich der Hinweis darauf hindurchzieht, wie fern der Mensch an und für sich davon ist, das Wesen Gottes als seines Vaters zu verstehen, und wie sehr er es bedarf, dass ihm das Geheimniss desselben erschlossen werde. Deutlich ausgesprochen ist dies Matt. xi. 27 . . . Hier handelt es sich zunächst nur darum, festzustellen, dass wenn Jesus Gott seinen und der Seinigen Vater nennt, er damit auf eine innere, geheimnissvolle, zunächst ihm und durch ihn den Seinigen gewordene Offenbarung zurückweist."—Ehrhardt, *Der Grundcharakter der Ethik Jesu*, pp. 78, 79.

looked upon as dissoluble. It was of no small consequence that, in the earliest times, the relation of Jehovah to His people was considered not as simply natural, but as positive and morally conditioned. The deities of the surrounding peoples were bound to stand by their worshippers, assisting them in war, for instance, under all circumstances; Jehovah, on the contrary, might, for moral reasons, withdraw His support at any time, if obedience failed on the part of His worshippers. The covenant was broken, and obligation ceased. This idea was at the back of all the discipline of the Old Testament, and it educated Israel into ethical monotheism. Yet the principle might be misunderstood, and it was grossly perverted when the Pharisees, confident in the security of their own relation to Jehovah, looked down upon the publicans and sinners, not to speak of the Samaritans and the Gentiles, as being outside the covenant and, therefore, without a share in the care of the divine heart. It was against this dark background that Jesus proclaimed the fatherly love of God—a love which embraces all without distinction and cannot be dissolved by the ill-doing of its objects. Nothing, however, is more certain than that this aspect of the divine love is no less capable of misrepresentation than the other. If the old prophetic view of God proved capable of being construed into Pharisaic arrogance and contempt, the New Testament conception can be perverted into

Sadducean laxity. It is probable that both views are requisite to convey a complete conception of the divine love; and that the older view is not antiquated is suggested by the fact that it recurs not only in the Bride, the Lamb's wife, of the Book of Revelation, and in St. Paul's remarkable comparison, in Ephesians, of the union of Christ and the Church with that of husband and wife, but in our Lord's own appellation of Himself as the Bridegroom, and in the parable of the King who made a Marriage for his Son. Which of the two human relationships is the better fitted to bring out the depth and mystery of the love of God to men, everyone may be left to decide for himself.*

Whether or not, however, fatherhood be the culminating expression in revelation for the love of God, the name of heavenly Father irradiates the teaching of Jesus, and has supplied to the human imagination a plastic and fecund image, from which thoughts of the Deity, just and attractive, have been evolved. Jesus gave to His own conception of what human fatherhood may be peerless expression in the figure of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son; for this is no ordinary father, but one clothed with resources, dignity and wisdom, and, above all, invested with the magnanimity of forgiveness. It suggests the sublime thought of St. Paul, that it is

* This thought is more fully worked out in the third of three Lectures on the Atonement published by the author a year ago.

not human fatherhood which enables us to comprehend divine fatherhood, but rather the fatherhood of God that begets and shapes the fatherhood of man.* And this may suggest the further reflection that, not only do all pure forms of earthly love point upwards to features of the divine love, but that in the Divine Being there is something great and incomprehensible from which all these earthly fires have been kindled, and which is expressed in the final testimony of revelation that "God is love."

* Eph. iii. 15, "The Father from whom every fatherhood [R.V. *marg.*] in heaven and on earth is named."

THE THINGS OF GOD

Matthew xii. 1-8, 9-13; xxiv. 20.
Mark i. 21; ii. 23-28; iii. 1-6; vi. 2; xvi. 9.
Luke iv. 16, 31; vi. 1-11; xiii. 10-17; xiv. 1-6.

Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 12, 17-19, 21-48; vi. 29; vii. 12; viii. 4, 11; ix. 13; x. 10; xi. 10, 13, 14; xii. 3-7, 37-42; xiii. 14-17; xv. 3-9; xvii. 11, 12; xix. 3-9; xxi. 13, 16, 42; xxii. 29-32, 34-46; xxiii. 2, 3, 29-32, 35-37; xxiv. 15, 37-39; xxvi. 24, 31, 54.
Mark ii. 23-28; vi. 13; ix. 12, 13; x. 2-12; xii. 18-27; xiii. 14; xiv. 21, 27, 49.
Luke iv. 4, 8, 12; vi. 3, 4, 23, 26; vii. 27, 28; x. 24; xi. 28-32, 47-52; xiii. 28, 34; xvi. 16, 17, 22, 31; xvii. 26-29, 32; xviii. 20; xix. 9; xx. 37, 41-44; xxi. 22; xxii. 37; xxiv. 25-27, 44-46.

Matthew v. 44; vi. 5-15; vii. 7-11; ix. 37, 38; xvii. 21; xviii. 19, 20; xxi. 22; xxiii. 14; xxiv. 20; xxvi. 36-46, 53.
Mark i. 35; vi. 41, 46; viii. 6, 7; ix. 29; x. 16; xx. 17, 24, 25; xii. 40; xiii. 18, 33; xiv. 22, 23, 32-42.
Luke iii. 21; v. 16; vi. 12, 28; ix. 16, 18, 28, 29; x. 2; xi. 1-13; xviii. 1-14; xix. 46; xx. 47; xxi. 36; xxii. 32, 39-46; xxiii. 34, 46; xxiv. 30, 50, 51.

Matthew xvi. 18, 19; xviii. 15-20; xxii. 21; xxvi. 26-30.
Mark i. 21, 23, 39; ii. 18-28; iii. 1-5; v. 38; vi. 2; xi. 11, 15-17, 27; xii. 39, 41-44; xiii. 1, 2, 3, 9, 14; xiv. 12-16, 49, 58; xv. 38.
Luke ii. 49; iv. 8, 15, 18, 33; v. 14, 33-39; vi. 4, 6; x. 31, 32; xi. 37-54; xii. 11; xiii. 10; xviii. 10; xix. 45-47; xxi. 5, 6, 7-20, 37, 38, 53.

CHAPTER XII.

THE THINGS OF GOD

NOT only does Jesus demand for God the strongest affection of the heart, but, according to His teaching, this internal state of mind has a bearing on what may be called the things of God,* such as public worship, the Bible, the Sabbath, prayer, and the like.

It has sometimes been contended that between the internal sentiment of religion, the most emphatic name for which is the love of God, and the external practice of religion there is no necessary connection. There are countries, for example, where the habitual neglect of the house of God is not considered inconsistent with a profession of Christianity. It has even been contended that the religion of the heart and the religion of outward ceremonies have always been opposed to each other. A true revival always drives those influenced by it inwards, to the cultivation of a secret life of communion with God; but, by

* This phrase is His own: "Thou savourest not the things that be of God," τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ; "Render unto God the things that are God's," τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

degrees, this spiritual tendency is captured by the manipulators of ecclesiastical machinery, who exploit it for their own interests—that is, in the interest of churches, Sundays and liturgies. In one generation there is a period of the spirit, when the religious nature of many is awakened and they experience an inner walk with God, which both secures their secret felicity and influences their outward behaviour as members of society; but, in the next generation, the children or the grandchildren of these persons, growing up in the pious habits transmitted from their fathers but not having experienced any deep religious change of their own, must, if they are to be kept in connection and attachment with religion, be gratified with orderly and beautiful forms, which appeal to the æsthetic sensibilities.

Of the truth of this opposition, it may be said, there could be no more glaring example than that of Jesus Himself. His was a religion of the heart; but He was surrounded by a generation absorbed in religious rites and forms; and so violent was the collision between the opposite tendencies that He perished in the attempt to counteract the prevailing practices. In Palestine, in His day, there existed two great centres of religion—the temple and the synagogue. The former was the more ancient; with it were associated the grand names and many of the most thrilling events of the national history; its form of worship was sacrifice, which was centralised in

Jerusalem and Mount Zion. The synagogue was a later development; it was localised in every town and hamlet in the country; its services were far less gorgeous than those of the temple, but they appealed more directly to the intellect and more immediately affected the life. The heads of the temple worship were the high-priests, who formed the strength of the Sadducean party; those of the synagogue were the scribes, who belonged mainly to the party of the Pharisees. But both high-priests and scribes were bitter opponents of Christ. The enmity of the latter was the first to manifest itself; in every district of the country in which He appeared the local heads of the synagogues being His uncompromising opponents. He Himself began early to answer scorn with scorn; and, at length, He emptied all the vials of His prophetic wrath on the heads of scribes and Pharisees. Against the Sadducees He did not direct His philippics nearly so frequently; but it was by the high-priesthood that He was put to death, this authority being at the time the seat of judicial power; and, if, during His lifetime, the Sadducees were less prominent than the Pharisees in opposing Him, the situation was reversed after His death, when the persecution of the Early Church proceeded principally from this party.

From the recorded sayings of Jesus there might be collected an entire artillery of weapons with which to assail the forms and functionaries of public religion;

and His whole life might be written as that of an enemy of rabbinism and ecclesiasticism. Indeed, there is enough of truth in such a representation to give serious pause to those who either are themselves teachers of the doctrine and conductors of the worship of the Church or who have the prospect before them of becoming such. I should not think much of the man charged with these duties who, in reading the Gospels, was not sometimes pulled up by the question whether, if he had lived in the days of which he is reading, he might not have been found among the upholders of tradition and the enemies of the Reformer who was setting at defiance so many of the current opinions and practices.

In spite, however, of all these facts, Jesus was not an enemy of public religion. On His trial He was accused of saying, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands"; and, although the testimony of the witnesses brought in support of the statement did not agree together, the probability is that it was so far true as to indicate that He had predicted the passing away of the worship of the temple; but He did so only on the assumption that He was to put another form of public worship in its place. In the same way, although He attacked the rabbis with unsparing severity, yet He foretold that He was Himself to send forth into the world rabbis of a different description: "Behold, I send unto you,"

were His words, "prophets and wise men and scribes," Matt. xxiii. 34. Thus He assumes that the worship in which these functionaries had assisted must go on, with only the difference that it was to be modified in accordance with the spirit of His Gospel.

That which He utterly repudiated in the worship of the time was the notion that ritual has an independent value apart from the character and the profit of the worshipper. Worship was supposed to be a tribute which gratified God and accumulated, in His hands, merits credited to the worshipper which would be awarded when the proper time came. So far had this gone that ritual was actually made use of to compound for the neglect of the most obvious moral duties, as in the case of the Corban, by which children relieved themselves from the duty of sustaining their parents through making a payment to the ecclesiastical treasury. Jesus accuses His contemporaries of thus making void the law by their traditions. "And many like things," He added, "ye do." In all ages this has been the error of ecclesiastical life—the idea that worship is intended for the gratification of the Deity, instead of the benefit of the worshipper. The service, on the contrary, with which God is well pleased is the doing of His will; and this consists not in the performance of ritual but in the growth of character. More than once He quoted the Old Testament maxim, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice"; and He stated the principle broadly in

the great saying: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." Here, in the three words "judgment, mercy and faith," we have a summary of those things with which God is well pleased and for the production of which all worship ought to be carried out; "mint and anise and cummin" having become proverbial to denote the mere outside and ceremonial of worship. Yet it is noteworthy that Jesus does not altogether ignore or undervalue even the latter; for He says, Ye ought to have done the great things and not to have left the small things undone. What He desiderated was proportion and measure: He did not condemn ritual, but wished it to be relegated to its proper place.

The portion of the things of God, as these existed in His time and country, to which He appeared to take up the most uncompromising attitude of opposition was the Sabbath. Again and again did He come into the sharpest collision on this subject with the ecclesiastical authorities; and so completely did He separate Himself from their traditional mode of reverencing the day that it has not infrequently been inferred that His intention was to abolish the institution altogether. Even Luther made this mistake and

embodied it in the Augsburg Confession; and the Reformers generally, in their zeal for abolishing the Saints' Days and other festivals with which the Church of Rome had over-burdened the Christian community, did not clearly distinguish between the authority by which these were sanctioned and that by which the Sabbath is supported. It was in Puritan England that it was first clearly perceived in modern times* that the Sabbath rests on an entirely different footing from Saints' Days, and that it is possible by abolishing these to make its divine right shine out more conspicuously. The great word of Jesus on the subject is: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," which is certainly a vindication of the right of man to have the observance of the Sabbath so arranged as to be no yoke, but a palpable relief and benefit. Nevertheless, the first part of the statement obviously looks back to the creation of man at the beginning and implies that the necessity for a Sabbath is rooted in the human constitution; so that it must last as long as man is what he is. Thus the Sabbath holds a place in what may be called the law of creation. To this primeval sanction there is added another through its occurrence

* As early, however, as the fourth century it was recognised that the Christian Sunday had taken the place of the Jewish Sabbath and rested on the same authority; and this was the accepted view in subsequent centuries. See the article entitled *Geschichte des Sonntags vornehmlich in der alten Kirche* in Zahn's *Skizzen*.

among the Ten Commandments, which Jesus expressly re-enacted. This second authorisation is not disproved by the fact that there may be a national and temporary element in the form in which it appears in the Decalogue; for this is the case also with others of the commandments—the fifth, for example—which certainly are in their essence eternal and immutable. The Scottish Church, in both of its great sections, has been tempted, in the course of the last half-century, by the influence of great and beloved names,* to give up this position and to rest the authority of the Lord's Day solely on the recognition by the Christian Church of what is due to the memory of her Lord's resurrection; but, after mature deliberation, she has resolutely declined to do so, believing herself to be interpreting her Lord's mind aright when basing the observance of this day on the threefold authority of the primeval sanction, the Decalogue and Christian propriety.

It has often been remarked that the position of the Sabbath in the Decalogue, looking back to the commandments respecting the things of God and forward to those respecting the things of man, is an indication of the service it is intended to render as the guardian and defence of both classes of duties; and certainly it discharges this function, at any rate, to what we have called the things of God; because the chance which all of these have of receiving the attention

* Dr. Norman Macleod and Dr. Walter C. Smith.

which is their due depends on mankind having time to occupy mind and heart with them.*

While, however, we contend that it would not be in accordance with the spirit of Jesus to abolish an institution so essential to the things of God, it would be still more at variance with His sayings on the subject, as these stand under our eyes in the record, not to confess that this institution is liable to be turned into a fetich, round which a conception of religion may gather which is not that of the Author of Christianity at all; and that those who by their teaching or practice have to determine the modes in which the day is observed are bound to see that it is fitted to be a delight and not a weariness. Its hours and its exercises may be treated as the coins in which tribute is paid to the Deity, exactly as they were by scribes and Pharisees; but the intention of Jesus is that out of the sacred hours there should be derived the rest and the strength required for living on the other days of the week a life of "judgment, mercy and faith"; and this is what He meant when He said: "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Some hold this saying to be a palmary instance to prove that, in the vocabulary of Jesus, the phrase "the Son of man" means simply "man"; because, in their opinion, the natural conclusion from the premises is that "man" is lord of the Sabbath. But Jesus can never have meant to say that "man"

* Cf. D. M. Ross, *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 173.

is lord of the Sabbath, thus submitting the sublime institution to the arbitrament of his taste and fancy. On the contrary, it may be seen in this saying how far Jesus was conscious of standing above ordinary men, and yet how linked He felt Himself to be with humanity. He is so connected with all men as to be fit to be the mouthpiece of all in vindicating their claim to a gift given them at the Creation against the encroachments of all who, under whatever pretence, would deprive them of their birthright.

If Jesus was at variance with the traditional worship in the observance of the Sabbath, there were two of its forms with which, on the contrary, He was in the closest sympathy and affinity.

One of these was the reading of Scripture. The books of the Old Testament had been divided by the scribes into well-arranged lessons, and these were read regularly in public worship all the year round. It was from listening to these lessons that Jesus acquired His matchless knowledge of Holy Writ. But He had also learned Himself to read the sacred pages, so that He could be called upon to read these in the audience of the people. Whether in His own home there may have been any portions of the rolls we do not know; perhaps the more likely supposition is that He obtained access to these treasures by ingratiating Himself with the keeper of the manuscripts belonging to the synagogue of

Nazareth. At any rate, from His quotations, which are very numerous, we can assure ourselves that He was familiar with every part of the Scriptures. Less remarkable, however, is the extent of His knowledge than the depth of His insight. Rarely does He quote a text without unfolding some meaning in it which could only have disclosed itself to one brooding long and lovingly; and He would reproach even the scribes themselves for the superficiality of their reading of the sacred documents of which they were the official custodians by introducing His interpretation with the words, "Have ye never read?" or "Go and learn what this meaneth."

That Jesus attributed to the Old Testament the very highest divine authority there can be no question whatever. Through it He conversed habitually with His Father in Heaven; and, in the most trying passages of His own life, especially towards the end, He found, to His comfort, His pathway clearly indicated in prophecy; so that, for example, He could say to the disciples on the way to Emmaus: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written"; "and, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." On the other hand, when a precept of Moses was quoted against Him, He did not hesitate to say: "For the hardness of your hearts Moses gave you this law; but from the beginning it was not so";

and then He proceeded, by adducing the Scriptural account of the Creation, to correct the impression which the scribes had derived from the reading of the words of Moses. Thus, if the Old Testament required amendment, He could correct it out of itself. In the Sermon on the Mount He corrected in a similar way the impressions produced by other precepts of the ancient code, only in these cases He sets His own authority more directly in opposition to that of Moses.

In our own day the question has been much discussed whether, by His references to Moses, David and Jonah, He is to be understood as giving authoritative pronouncements on questions of the Higher Criticism which have recently come to the front. On this subject no scholar has written more profoundly or wisely than the late Professor Tholuck; and it may be worth while to quote his summing-up on this particular point in his precious little book entitled *The Old Testament in the New*: "Human knowledge is of two kinds—that which, under greater or less external stimulus, develops itself purely inwardly in thought or intuition, and that which is learned from man and can be stamped upon the memory. If the development of the Redeemer was a universally human one, the knowledge inside the religious-moral sphere, especially that necessary for the interpretation of the Scriptures, which has to be learned by memory can only have become known to Him according to the state of culture in His time,

and the means of education which His circumstances supplied. Proofs could be adduced that even in such questions, belonging to learned exegesis, as for instance the historical connection of a passage, or the writer and age of a book, an original spiritual glance, even without the culture of the schools, can frequently divine the truth; and the highest degree of this divinatory power is to be ascribed to Jesus. Yet this cannot take the place of real scientific study. Not to reveal science, not even theological science, to the world, did the Redeemer appear, but to speak and live out before mankind the truth of religion and morals. Although we find, in the sayings of Jesus we possess, no formal hermeneutic mistake, yet the impossibility of such cannot be asserted *a priori* any more than the impossibility of a grammatical blunder or a chronological slip. If the period of critical rationalism has swept like a flood over the older theology, and carried away many traditional views and prejudices, it has at least left us one gain—the consciousness of the distinction between Christian-religious knowledge, which belongs to mankind, and Christian-theological knowledge, which belongs to the school."

The other portion of the worship of the synagogue in which Jesus seems to have particularly delighted was prayer. No change in the religious history of mankind is more momentous than that from the worship of God by sacrifice to worship by means of

prayer. The difference was immense between the religious notions of a Hebrew who, in order to deal with God about himself, had to travel to the sanctuary at Jerusalem and offer a sacrifice to Jehovah there, through the intervention of a priest, and that of one who, wherever he might be, in the utmost corner of the land, could, by shutting his eyes and lifting up his hands, deal with the Deity there and then. The rise of the synagogue-system, for which there is no legal warrant in the Old Testament, was an evidence that this momentous transition had been accomplished; and it fostered greatly the simpler and more spiritual form of worship. Jesus entered into it with all His heart. It is known how He used, during His public ministry, to retire to the mountain—that is, not any particular mountain, but the mountainous region which was accessible from nearly every town of Palestine—to pray. To these solitudes He sometimes climbed before sunrise, and before the human beings around Him were astir; sometimes He would go up in the evening and spend the whole night among the silent pastures; and it is noticeable that such a night of prayer was apt to precede the occurrence of any momentous choice or pivotal incident in His life. These habits He taught also to His disciples; and He accompanied His efforts with many a direction as to the spirit and manner of prayer. Thus, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, He utterly condemned the kind of

prayer which is offered as a tribute to God and expresses the worshipper's sense of fulness and self-sufficiency, while He indicated that the prayer which prevails is that which expresses the sense of need and comes to receive everything from the Deity.* In the parables of the Unjust Judge and the Friend at Midnight, He recommended a holy urgency as one of the virtues of prayer ; and He frequently expatiated on the advantages of united prayer, setting no limits to the efficacy of prayer in which two or more agree together. It must have been with a profound experience of having obtained much Himself from this source that He gave the assurance: "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you ; for everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The Lord's Prayer is the summing-up of all His teaching on this subject ; and, among the innumerable truths to be learnt from it, none is more palpable than the stress laid on the things of God. It was remarked, in an earlier portion of this volume, that out of seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer three are devoted to sin under different points of view, and this fact was taken as an indication of the importance of that subject in

* The phrase in Luke xviii. 14, "Justified rather than the other," supposes the two men to be appealing to God to decide which is the genuine kind of prayer ; and the Judge gives the decision in favour of the one and against the other. Compare what was said on p. 60 about "righteousness."

the mind of Jesus. Similarly it has now to be noticed that other three—and these the three opening petitions of the prayer—relate to the things of God; and we may draw the same inference, that the prominence thus given to these proves the value placed on them by Jesus. In comparison, daily bread, which stands for those things which are believed by people who do not themselves pray to be the great topics of prayer, absorbs only a single petition. The things of God were foremost in the mind of Jesus, and foremost He desired them to be in the minds of His disciples in their holiest moments.

The elements of worship hitherto discussed belong as much to the exercise of private as public devotion; but, when we now come to what belonged distinctively to the latter, we perceive that Jesus was not an enemy to it, but the reverse.

Not only was He carried to the temple in His infancy, to be made a citizen of the holy nation through the rite of circumcision, but, at the age of twelve, He was brought to the same place at one of the annual feasts; and on this occasion His enthusiasm for the sacred building and the rites concentrated there was evinced both by the extraordinary incident of His staying behind after His parents had left the spot and by His remarkable saying: "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" The same enthusiasm blazed

forth again in a flame of prophetic zeal when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of thieves." During His public ministry Jesus was a regular visitor to the Holy City at the festivals; and, on these occasions, He appears to have been a frequenter of the temple; for, during His trial, He said to His accusers: "I was daily with you in the temple, and ye found no fault in Me." To the sacrifices of the place there is little allusion in His words, though this is not entirely wanting; but, on one of the last evenings of His life, He observed the Passover with His disciples; and the lamb which they used on that occasion must have been sacrificed like the other victims of the festival.

On one of the last days of His life, sitting with certain of His disciples on the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, He discoursed with great solemnity on the approaching fall of the venerable edifice; and there can be little doubt that He implied that the worship, along with the building, was to be swept away. But, months before, He had sketched the outline of a system of worship that was to take its place. It was at Cæsarea Philippi, at the close of His Galilean ministry, that, upon hearing St. Peter's great confession, which acknowledged Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, He replied, after acknowledging the confession:

"Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail* against it." Into these expressions so much has been read, and so interminable have been the controversies waged over them, that it is difficult to get back to their original meaning; but, at the very least, they foreshadow a community engaged in religious worship, and destined to last as long as the world. And the same fact is indicated in the saying: "Where two or three are met together in My name,

* The difficult words that follow (Matt. xvi. 19), "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," are interpreted by Calvin as applying solely to doctrine —the authoritative formulation of the truth in correspondence with Scripture (*Institutes*, bk. iv., ch. ii.). The similar passage, (Matt. xviii. 18), "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," he refers similarly to discipline in the Church, with which the preceding verses are obviously dealing. In both cases he enters fully into the conditions and limitations under which alone it can be claimed that the decisions of the Church have the authority of Heaven. At such limitations the Church of Rome may be scornful, quoting them as evidence that Protestant ministers have not faith in their own authority; but she ought to remember how numerous and notorious are the instances in which the mind and conscience of the world have decided that what has been bound or loosed by her on earth cannot possibly have been bound or loosed in heaven. It is certainly wonderful that Christ should have attributed such powers to human beings at all; but it is only explicable on the understanding that these are acting in prayerful submission to the leading of the Holy Ghost and in modest loyalty to the guidance of Scripture.

there am I in the midst of them." He made known that the entry to the Church was to be through an initiatory rite, occupying the same place as circumcision had done in the former economy, when He charged His apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the other great rite of the Church was instituted by Him, when, on the night of the Passover, and with the very elements with which He and His disciples were celebrating that ordinance, He observed the Lord's Supper. On the part of some German divines there has recently been an attempt to prove that Jesus did not intend this to be a lasting ordinance; but it is impossible to conceive of a discussion in which there is less reality.* The real difficulty about these two rites of Christianity is not whether or not Jesus instituted them, but how He could have done so if He had foreknown that they were in the course of the Christian centuries to be converted into such instruments of superstition; for round them have gathered all the most glaring perversions of the religion which calls itself by His name. This is a great mystery, for the clearing up of which we must wait to the day of

* In Wellhausen's commentary on St. Mark (*in loc.*) will be found a summary of recent discussions in Germany on this subject; but I find it difficult to comprehend of what use it can be to anyone who is in pursuit of things, not of words.

revelation; but in the meantime the duty of the Church is to ascertain, with the greatest possible exactness, what Jesus Himself intended by these rites and seek to make them subservient to the ends which He had in His mind.

With the other centre of religion in Palestine Jesus was even more familiar, and the Church of primitive times was even more directly modelled on the synagogue than on the temple. Undoubtedly Jesus was a regular and diligent attender of the synagogue in His childhood and youth; and, during His public ministry, He made constant use of the opportunities afforded by it to meet with and instruct the people. It was in the synagogue of Nazareth that, after reading a passage from Isaiah in which the prophetic office of the Messiah is described in the most impressive terms, He turned the words into a manifesto of His own Messiahship. It is distinctly said that He preached throughout all the synagogues of Galilee, and some of His miracles were wrought in the same buildings. When the apostles went forth, after the Ascension, to preach the Gospel, it was in the synagogue everywhere that they secured their first hearing; and, even if they were driven thence, the new place of worship, set up in its stead, copied the order of the synagogue as a matter of course.

It is often lightly said that, while Jesus diffused through the world the essence of truth and the

fragrance of an imperishable influence, He left behind Him no organization or machinery of an ecclesiastical nature. But to say so is hardly reconcilable with the copiousness with which He spoke about such subjects as the Sabbath, the Bible and prayer, or with the pregnant hints which may be found among His sayings as to the doctrine, the worship and the discipline of the Church. It ought to be remembered that He was born and grew up in a community where the religious organization exercised over the lives of His fellow-countrymen a control separate from that of the State—to which, indeed, at the time, the State was hostile—but which was certainly not inferior in influence to the State. So much had this influence been to Himself and those nearest Him, that it was the most natural thing in the world for Him to think of it, or something equivalent, as controlling the world of the future. It is, no doubt, with the intention of honouring Jesus that some attempt to separate Him from the ecclesiastical organization; but the history of religions does not support the idea that mere spiritual influences, breathed into the air, last long or travel far. On the contrary, it demonstrates that, to provide channels in which beliefs and practices may flow on from land to land, and from age to age, is, only less than the invention of such inspirations themselves, the prerogative of religious genius.

THE LOVE OF MAN

Matt. v. 23, 24, 38-48.
vi. 1-5, 12.
xviii. 15-17.
xix. 16-22.
xx. 25-28.
xxii. 21, 39, 40.

Mark iii. 4.
vi. 37, 38, 41, 42.
vii. 34.
x. 19.
xii. 28-34.

Luke vi. 27-38, 41, 42.
x. 25-37.
xi. 42.
xviii. 1-8, 18-27.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOVE OF MAN

TO the second great commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—Jesus rendered a still greater service than to the first by lifting it out of the place where it occurs in the Old Testament and stamping it with His imprimatur; as may be seen by anyone who will take the trouble to look it up in the Book of Leviticus; for there it will be found side by side with a law forbidding the wearing of clothing made partly of wool and partly of linen, and another forbidding the sowing of a field with divers kinds of seeds.

It would appear, indeed, from the record of the life of Jesus, that the scribes in His day had not altogether overlooked this commandment. On the contrary, it had come under their frequent notice; but they had given to it a distortion which exposes what manner of teachers they were; for, assuming that it could not possibly mean what it said, they read it in this way: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." Nor did this remain a mere speculation or dead letter: it is well known how

the Jews did actually hate the Samaritans, putting them on the same level with the heathen, and how, even among their own fellow-countrymen, they extended the same dislike and hostility to the publicans and sinners. Nor was this inability to comprehend the philanthropy which lies at the root of this great law of the Old Testament confined to the Jews. The cultivated peoples of the West divided mankind into Greeks and barbarians, the latter being objects of aversion and contempt. Among both Greeks and Romans it was esteemed, as is remarked in *Ecce Homo*, the highest praise of a dead man to say that none had done more good to his friends or more harm to his foes; and, amongst savage races, the hatred of enemies has usually been regarded as a religious duty.

Once, when Jesus was quoting the second great commandment from the Old Testament, He was confronted with this monstrous limitation of its sweep and application, by a scribe among the by-standers asking, "But who is my neighbour?" Evidently the man desired the term "neighbour" to have a limited scope, while he craved permission to hate the immeasurable circle of his fellow-creatures lying beyond. Jesus answered by narrating the parable of the Good Samaritan—one of the divinest of His inspirations. It would not be easy to comprise the teaching of this great utterance in any brief formula. The conduct of the priest and the Levite was intended to show how zeal for God may be

attended with total lack of sympathy with man; while the appearance of the Samaritan proves how far, sometimes, the simple instincts of nature may outrun the artificial training of religion. But undoubtedly the point of the parable lies in the scope assigned to the term "neighbour"; and never was there an instance which more fully demonstrated how Jesus could impose an utterly novel point of view on opinion and conduct. The definition is found by Him, not in the claim of the person to be loved, but in the heart of the person who loves. The conduct of the Samaritan could not but command admiration; and Jesus concludes from it that all should act in such a way as to secure similar acknowledgment. It is the identical sentiment which He has stamped forever as the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

There is no reason to doubt that much virtue may reside in the mere elevation of this commandment to the position assigned to it by Jesus; and a great deal may be done by merely repeating the precepts in which it is more fully formulated and urging these on the attention of all. Learning may also help to throw them into relief by comparing and contrasting them with the ethical precepts of other systems. For example, there has been much discussion as to whether the Golden Rule can be

demonstrated to have been ever enunciated by any moralist before our Lord. I believe the result of such investigations has been to establish His originality; the nearest approach to the Christian precept being the negative one: Do not to others anything which you would not that they should do to you. *

Still, I should doubt, whether the ethical originality of Jesus is to be chiefly sought in the difference between His ethical precepts and those of other masters. To give utterance to such sentiments, however sublime, is a comparatively easy thing; and multitudes have been able to utter such, or at least to admire them when uttered by others, without exhibiting the smallest disposition to practise them. The real difficulty appears rather to lie in quickening the will in such a way that it may be disposed to follow the lofty path, when it is descried; and, therefore, we do not so much inquire what ethical precepts Jesus uttered which were novel and superior to those already made current by others as ask what new motives He was able to bring into play, to stimulate the sluggish will and thereby give the commandments a chance of being fulfilled.

* The Book of Tobit, iv. 15, says: "And what thou thyself hatest, do to no man." Hillel is reported to have said, "What is disagreeable to thyself, that do not to thy neighbour." See the subject investigated by Barth, *Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu*, p. 85.

In speaking in a previous chapter of the contribution made by Jesus to the first great commandment —that which enjoins the love of God—I remarked that it was not so much by bringing this commandment forth out of obscurity, or by reiterating and emphasizing it, that He secured for it a new hold on the attention of men; but rather by making it easier to love God; this being effected by showing the divine Being to be more lovable; and a similar statement may now be made concerning this second commandment: it was not by uttering the commandment in a louder voice or repeating it more frequently that Jesus secured for it new attention, but by making it easier to love man—by showing how worthy of reverence and regard human nature is.

There are no more characteristic elements in the Gospel and none which have exerted profounder influence in history than those which bring out the infinite worth attaching to the meanest member of the human species. Such is the great saying, commented on in a previous chapter: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Such are the parables in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, which reveal the joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Such is the great discourse on offences, also commented on already, where the Teacher deprecates the mishandling of the very least of those who believe in Him as a sacrilege worthy of the direst punish-

ment.* To the same kind of impression the uniform behaviour of Jesus to the poor and suffering, to children and to women, immensely contributed. It is to the generation of such sentiments of respect and tenderness for all human beings, even the smallest, the meanest and the worst, that the transformations wrought by Christianity in the behaviour

* Nothing is more characteristic of great literature than the power of uttering, in felicitous and arresting language, profound ethical principles, which flash into the abysses of human nature or irradiate vast tracts of human life. Of these I have collected, not without care, some forty, which will convey an impression of the wealth, in this respect, of the words of Jesus. I should not wonder if a book on the subject of this volume might be written with these as the mottoes of the chapters; and, at all events, I venture to commend them to anyone who may be stimulated by the reading of this book to give, in the pulpit, a course of lectures on the ethical teaching of Jesus.

They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

The disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his lord.

Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And, if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his

of man to man in the course of the centuries have been principally due.

Jesus never despised the body. How could He, when it is His Father's handiwork? "The very hairs of your head," He said, "are all numbered." He recognised the needs of the body when He taught men to pray, "Give us this day our daily

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goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.

For, whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

There is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.

If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.

He that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever will give you a cup of cold water to drink, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

With God all things are possible

No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will

bread." By His miracles of healing He imparted a new dignity to that art which has the body for its care. He permitted His own body to be anointed with the costliest spikenard, saying that this was done against His burial, and thus He sanctified the reverent disposal even of the corpse. Yet He esteemed the honour of the body nothing in com-

burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles will perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

With the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Wisdom is justified of all her children.

To whom little is forgiven the same loveth little.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter may see the light.

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

One thing is needful.

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate

parison with that of the soul: a single soul is worth the whole of the material universe, of which the body forms a part. When He thought or spoke of the soul, He saw, with the mind's eye, not only its present condition but its future possibilities—all it could grow to and would grow to—in union with Himself.* To the greatest thinkers of the race

the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The labourer is worthy of his hire.

Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.

Salt is good; but, if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.

But I say unto you, that, every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.

All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

* This thought is well worked out in the sixth chapter of E. Grimm's *Die Ethik Jesu*—an able book on our subject, but one which I never open without annoyance that we have not received a greater one from the man who was able to write a work so brilliant as *Das Problem Friedrich Nietzsches*.

before Him immortality had been only an occasional and dubious surmise, as indeed, even at the present day, the world's greatest thinkers, apart from Him, are still involved in the same hesitation. But Jesus moved in an atmosphere of serene certainty on this subject; He dwelt in eternity, as in His proper home and fatherland; and His faith in immortality was not for Himself alone, but for all His brother men. It depended, in the last resort, on the consciousness of His return to the heavenly Father. But this faith also He cherished not only for Himself but also for His brethren. He knew that they had come from God and that they were going to God. Such was their dignity and such their destiny. And about beings concerning whom this could be said no mean thought should ever be cherished. In the eyes of Jesus this sovereign prerogative belonged to men without distinction; it was not limited by race or creed, by class or age or sex; and this was the foundation laid by Him for the honour and the love He claimed for each and all.

It is only saying the same thing in different language if we assert that the chief service rendered by Jesus to this second commandment was to associate it so closely with the first. In the Old Testament they lie apart, with no indication of any connection between them; but He brought the two together in such a manner as to suggest that they have an intimate relation to each other. In reality

they are twin commandments; and so closely are they connected that they cannot exist, or, at all events, they cannot have a healthy existence apart.

Even the first great commandment is not independent of the second; for, although in logic the first is primary, as it is in authority, yet in experience the second is first. It is through the domestic affections that the heart learns to know what love itself is, and, if it did not first love man, it would never love God. The growth and refinement of the natural affections prepare the heart for satisfactions which these cannot fully supply; and the intensity of human love supplies a standard by which we can measure our love to God. On the other hand, the first great commandment acts as a protection and a stimulus to the second. When love to God is thoroughly awakened, it is the most decisive of all breaks with selfishness, and, the spell of this entanglement once broken, every development of altruistic sentiment becomes possible. The love of man is commanded in the law of God and backed with all the sanctions by which the law is enforced.

Yet there has always existed a disposition to separate the two commandments from each other. In ancient times this manifested itself in the sacrifice of the second to the first. Ritual was substituted for righteousness, and men were able to believe themselves the friends of God and the favourites of Heaven, whilst behaving with injustice and cruelty

to their fellow-creatures. In the first chapter of Isaiah the eloquence of the great prophet is hurled against this abuse, and there is no point to which the indignation of subsequent prophets is more frequently directed. Jesus had to take up the same strain; for this was one of the most crying evils of His time. With many a keen and cutting sarcasm did He attack the opinions and practices of His contemporaries, who thought themselves pleasing to God in heaven, on account of their fasts, prayers and Sabbaths, while grinding the faces of God's children on earth and devouring the property of widows and orphans. Of all His sayings of this nature the most unmistakeable perhaps was this: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In this saying, as well as in some others, He appears to put the second commandment first. This, however, was not really His intention: it was only by the perversity of the time that He was constrained to speak so strongly as to have the appearance of doing so.

The disposition to make religion a substitute for morality has not yet died out of the world; there are persons in whose breasts zeal for God seems to burn up sympathy with man; perhaps there are even races specially reliable to this aberration; and

it may be a besetting temptation of the clerical profession. But, in modern times, the opposite mistake is commoner—namely, the tendency to put asunder the two commandments by the sacrifice of the first. The service of man is set up as a rival to the service of God; and morality without religion is, in certain circles, a watchword of modern progress. There can be little doubt, however, that such a notion would have been even more painful to Jesus than that against which He protested, and that He would have discerned in it not only blasphemy against the Father whom He loved but, at the same time, a subtle and insidious attack upon the honour and highest interests of man. The way in which He tried to raise man in the esteem of his brother was by surrounding him with a halo of supernatural dignity in the spirit of the eighth Psalm, where man is declared to have been made but a little lower than God; all the rest of the creation being put under his feet. But, if this halo is evaporated and man reduced to the level of the animals, with no destiny before him more sacred than that of the worm or the clod, his defence is taken away, and he is exposed to the contempt of every passer-by. In the teaching of Jesus the fatherhood of God was the pre-supposition of the brotherhood of men; and the way in which He hoped to get men to love one another was by getting them to love their common Father in heaven.

As we pursue our quest among the sayings of Jesus for the new motives by which He hoped to facilitate the keeping of the second great commandment, we cannot help thinking of the wonderful statement of the duties of this commandment contained in the parable of the Last Judgment in the end of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew: "I was an hungred and ye gave Me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink," and so on; with the solemn negative statement of the same truth: "I was an hungred and ye gave Me no meat," and so on. No statement of duty to man more simple, searching or impressive could be conceived; but certainly the most striking thing in this parable is the assurance given to the righteous that what they had done to the poor and needy they had done to the Judge Himself; together with the opposite information, conveyed to the startled neglecters of the strangers and the prisoners, that the actions they had failed to perform to these had been accepted by the Judge as slights upon Himself. It is possible that the primary idea intended to be suggested is that, at the great day, all the compassionate and merciful will be treated as unconscious Christians, their almsdeeds being accepted as done to Christ, even if they have been unaware of His existence; but there is suggested, besides, a novel motive for conscious Christian benevolence; and this agrees with not a few other sayings, where He speaks of things being

done for His sake or in His name, and thereby acquiring an extraordinary virtue and significance. As, in the family, connection with the same father imparts to the children the power of doing for one another far more than the ordinary man is able to do for a neighbour, or as, in the State, the patriotism felt for a common country makes it easy to do for a fellow-countryman what it would be impossible to do for a stranger, so Jesus would appear to have expected a common connection with Himself to enable men to love one another, and consequently to do to one another deeds of love, far beyond what is attainable under the impulse of ordinary motives. This was a wonderful hope for anyone to entertain about himself; yet in this case it has been fulfilled, and all the indications appear to show that it is secure of yet more ample fulfilment. Intelligent Christians look at this world through the eyes of Christ; they think and feel about all men as He did; and they cannot neglect or despise any for whom He died.

There remains still, however, to be mentioned a motive which emerges in the words of Christ and may perhaps be said to go deeper than the one just mentioned. Jesus applied the law of love to an extreme case when He said: "Love your enemies." To the same effect He commanded to forgive injuries, putting into the Lord's Prayer the petition: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our

debtors," and frequently affirming with solemnity that, unless we forgive men their trespasses, our heavenly Father will not forgive us. Nothing of the kind had been conceived in the world before ; and it was to be expected that, when Jesus carried the application of the second commandment to this extremity, He would produce also the strongest of all motives for obeying it. Nor is this expectation disappointed. There is a parable of His about a king who would take account of his servants; and, when he began to reckon, there was brought to him one that owed him ten thousand talents—that is a fabulous sum, about two millions sterling. The culprit having no means of paying his debt, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had. But the wretch, falling down at his feet, cried: "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all"; and so moved was his lord with compassion that he forgave him all the debt. As the forgiven servant went out from his lord's presence, however, he encountered a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence—a mere bagatelle, half a millionth part of his own debt, which had been cancelled—and, seizing him by the throat, he demanded, "Pay me what thou owest." The debtor fell down at his feet, crying, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." But he would not, and threw him into prison, till the debt should be paid. This having come to the ears of the king,

he sent for the unmerciful servant and thus accosted him: "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst thou not have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" "And he was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors." By this graphic illustration Jesus showed whence, according to His mind, the spirit of forgiveness must come. Those who properly realise how vast is the debt they owe to God will not reckon at a high figure the injuries they may have sustained at the hands of their fellow-men, and those who have a proper estimate of the greatness of the forgiveness extended to themselves will not find it too difficult to forgive even their enemies. This is the most significant hint in the entire body of Christ's teaching as to the origin of the love of man; and what it seems to show is that, according to the mind of Jesus, its true source is the copious presence in the heart of love to God, springing from an abiding consciousness of having been forgiven much.[1]

[1] So Weinel (*Jesus im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 127), commenting on Luke vii. 47, says: "Der letzte Satz wird oft falsch gedeutet: man meint, Jesus sage, die Sünden seien ihr vergeben, weil sie ihm viel Liebe erwiesen habe. Das ist ganz falsch. Jesus will sagen, dem Gleichniss entsprechend: daran, das sie mir so viel Liebe erzeigt, erkenne ich, dass ihr viele Sünden vergeben sind, nur wem viele Sünden vergeben worden sind, der kann so viel dankbare Liebe zeigen."

THE THINGS OF MAN

Matt. vi. 2-4 ; ix. 13 ; x. 8 ; xii. 7 ; xxiii. 23 ; xxv. 31-46.
Mark i. 41 ; ii. 5, 11 ; v. 43 ; vi. 7, 13, 30, 31, 37, 41, 55, 56 ; viii. 1-9 ; ix. 25, 41 ; x. 45, 49 ; xi. 25 ; xii. 41-44 ; xiv. 3-9.
Luke iv. 40 ; v. 15 ; vi. 17-19 ; vii. 21, 22 ; ix. 1, 2, 13, 14, 56 ; x. 9, 33-35, 37 ; xi. 4, 5-13, 41 ; xii. 33 ; xiv. 1-14 ; xvi. 9 ; xviii. 18-27 ; xxi. 1-4 ; xxiii. 34.

Matt. iv. 19 ; v. 14, 15, 19 ; ix. 37, 38 ; x. 5-42 ; xiii. 31-33, 52 ; xxii. 9, 10 ; xxvi. 13 ; xxviii. 16-20.
Mark i. 17, 21, 22, 38, 39 ; ii. 2, 13, 17 ; iii. 14 ; iv. 1, 2, 3-9, 21, 22, 33, 34 ; v. 19 ; vi. 1-6, 12, 30, 34 ; xii. 1 ; xiii. 10, 11 ; xiv. 9, 49.
Luke ix. 15, 32, 43, 44 ; v. 1, 3, 10, 17 ; vi. 6 ; vii. 22 ; viii. 1, 4-18 ; xii. 2, 3 ; xiii. 26 ; xvi. 16 ; xxii. 32 ; xxiv. 47, 48.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THINGS OF MAN

IN the same way as love to God involves love to the things of God, so love to man has to manifest itself in sympathy and consideration for what may be called the things of man. And these manifestations of a Christian spirit may go out either to men in general or to our fellow-creatures in the relationships of life. Let us begin with duties to others in general.

On this subject no one has written more attractively than the author of *Ecce Homo*, in the second part of that work, where he deals with what he calls the Legislation of the Kingdom. It is true that this portion of the author's performance is less original than his opening chapters; but it was the first attempt in English to set forth, as a connected whole, the ethical teaching of Jesus, and the author selected a method which gave full scope to his own rare acquirements; exhibiting the outlines of Christian morality by contrasting it, point by point, with the ethics of the classical nations. With a sovereign survey not only over the philosophical speculation

of the ancients, but over the illustrative material supplied by the history and literature of Greece and Rome, he presents, against the background of the ancient beliefs and practices, the ideals of the new life introduced by Jesus. These he comprehends under five heads—the Law of Philanthropy, the Law of Edification, the Law of Mercy, the Law of Resentment, and the Law of Forgiveness. No method of teaching anything that is new can be more instructive and illuminative than thus to compare it with something else of the same kind with which the student is already familiar; and in this case everyone imbued with any tincture of classical knowledge must enjoy the saliency with which the features of the Christian ideal are brought out, especially as the ethical instincts of the author are as refined as his scholarship is thorough.

Yet it has long been manifest to scholars in this department that the analysis is not only limited but misleading. It is thoroughly English, and the point of view is that of an Oxford or Cambridge tutor, whose Moral Philosophy embraces only the duties of men to men, but not the duties of man to God. It was characteristic of the school of thought to which the author belonged to substitute favourite ideas of its own for the whole testimony of the Word of God; and it is only necessary to compare the texts which can, with the utmost stretching, be quoted in illustration of the five laws with the whole sum of the

ethical teaching of Jesus to see how defective the representation is. In reality, the author takes account only of the Sermon on the Mount—or rather of as much of this as is found in the sixth chapter of St. Luke—but this is no more than a tenth of the material in our hands.

Count Tolstoy knows a little better what he is doing. He is aware that the few sayings out of which he constructs his view of Christianity form but an inconsiderable portion of what has come down to us from the lips of Christ. But he also deliberately confines himself to about the same amount of material as the author of *Ecce Homo*, giving as his reason the fact that these few sayings have always seemed to him the essence of Christianity, all the rest, even when put in the mouth of the Founder, being wood, hay, stubble, in comparison. With this there are, no doubt, many who will sympathize; because, to the popular mind, choice selections from any great or beautiful production are, as a rule, more agreeable and acceptable than the thing itself. But this is not the temper of the genuine disciple, who, while recognising the incomparable freshness and aroma of the few sayings picked out by such writers, yet prefers the entire record, believing that the whole is greater than the parts, and that even those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

The sayings alluded to would embrace such as the

Golden Rule, the exquisite word about a cup of cold water given in the name of Jesus, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the address of the Judge at the Last Day to those on His right hand, and the like. As has been already hinted, there is a group of these in the report of the Sermon on the Mount in the sixth chapter of St. Luke: "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. For, if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And, if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And, if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil."

In this class of the sayings of our Lord there is a tone of exaggeration by no means easy to account for. There are sayings which not only

carry on the face of them an air of absurdity but stand in open contradiction to the conduct of Jesus as reported by the Evangelists. Thus, in one place He appears to forbid the taking of an oath in any circumstances, yet, on His trial, He made no scruple about the form of oath administered to Him by the high-priest. In one of the verses just quoted He demands that, when struck on the one cheek, we should turn the other also; but, when struck Himself, at the bidding of the high-priest, by a minion of the court during His trial, so far from turning the other cheek, He hurled at the official who was profaning the seat of justice an indignant protest. In another verse just cited, He commands to give to everyone who asks, but nothing was more characteristic in His own behaviour than the resolution with which He went His own way, turning a deaf ear to those who pestered Him with requests, as if they knew better than Himself the course which he ought to pursue; His fellow-townsmen thus being balked in their thirst for miracles, even His own mother not escaping sharp reproof for such interference, and His foremost disciple being dismissed with the rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

In the interpretation of such paradoxes Count Tolstoy has taken the bull by the horns, not only accepting every word literally, but even giving to some of them an application more drastic than

appears on the surface. Thus, the commandment, "Judge not," is not only taken literally as forbidding all criticism by private individuals of the conduct of others, but applied to all forms of legal procedure, which he would totally suppress. He narrates how, at the crisis of his own life, the saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "Resist not evil," dawned upon him as the master-utterance of the whole Bible, the consistent application of which all round would remedy the wrongs of society and effect the perfection of human character; and, with this key, he goes through the entire Sermon, intrepreting it as a manifesto of anarchy. While, however, the attitude of this thinker to the existing order of society no doubt receives explanation and perhaps, to a certain extent, justification from the maladministration of the Russian government, from which, in recent years, the veil has been so ruthlessly drawn, we must not allow ourselves to be blinded by respect for the man to the insuperable barriers which his teaching, if accepted as the genuine version of the Gospel of the New Testament, would erect between Jesus and the intelligence of the world. Such a literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount would rob it of all poetry and transmute the Preacher into a prosaic martinet.

Wendt, in his *Teaching of Jesus*, believes himself to have discovered a principle for explaining such difficult sayings, which he thus formulates: "In the

cases which He chooses for examples, He abstracts from all such circumstances and considerations as prevent the general rule from being clearly seen, although, when closely studied, these do not, in point of fact, invalidate or limit the application of the rule." To this principle he subjoins the observation, that Jesus was led to adopt this mode of emphasis by the casuistical practices of the scribes, which He abhorred. These were wont to accumulate difficult and exceptional cases for the purpose of evaporating the spirit of general commandments, whereas Jesus did the same thing with the intention of showing that, even when the fulfilment of the letter of the law might not be practicable, it might still be possible to carry out its spirit, provided the heart were possessed with the love of man and the love of God.*

I should be inclined to ascribe the phenomenon rather to a peculiarity of disposition in Jesus Himself, and to the unconscious tact of a supreme teacher. In the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke there has been preserved an account of His table-talk at the board of a Pharisee, who had invited Him to dinner. Some of His remarks on this occasion, if understood literally and prosaically, would not only be in bad taste, as seeming to find fault with domestic arrangements of which He was at the time taking advantage, but would be the

* Pp. 96 ff.

reverse of good advice from a moral point of view; for, as Calvin observes*: "To condemn the feasts which friends and relatives give to one another would be to take away from men a portion of their human nature; and to exclude our friends from the hospitable board, and give access to it only to strangers, would be a mark not so much of austerity as of barbarity." But the appearance of harshness vanishes, if we conceive Him to have uttered the words, as would have been fit and natural on such an occasion, with a kindly smile. By people incapable of understanding Him the tradition has been invented that He was never seen to laugh, but there are not a few of His dark sayings which become luminous the moment we admit the notion that He may have uttered them in a tone of pleasantry; and this is a case in point, because the Speaker lightly and archly satirises the commercial spirit in hospitality, when entertainers give only to receive as much again, while He puts the signature of His commendation on the true hospitality, which gives out of an overflowing heart without thought of recompense.

I venture to think that the ordinary reader, having a little humour in his composition, is not confused by these peculiarities of the teaching of Jesus. He perceives that what is described is an ideal; it is with the direction in which everyone's face is turned that the Teacher is concerned rather than with the

* *Commentary, in loc.*

several steps of the journey; it is not to slaves of the letter He is addressing Himself, but to lovers of the spirit. In short, it is the love of man He is teaching, not an array of new commandments intended to rival the endless traditions of the scribes. This we must hold even if it leaves it open to those so disposed to evaporate the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount into mere counsels of perfection, having nothing to do with the regulation of ordinary existence—a course not infrequently taken even by those who revere the Great Teacher.*

As has been remarked above, the author of *Ecce Homo* reduces the sayings of Jesus with which we are at present dealing to five laws; and he sometimes brings down the number to three. Indeed, they might be reduced to one. If all the sayings of this sort be examined, they will be found to express, in every form, the Law of Giving. It is as if Jesus set Himself to contradict the advice of the natural heart, which is always counselling to acquire and to keep. Self is the centre to which the thoughts and the efforts of men all run; Jesus, on the contrary, directed all thought and effort to run from this

* Dr. Sanday, in his famous article on Jesus Christ in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, speaks of the morality of the Sermon on the Mount as only fitted for individuals or, at most, a limited circle of the initiated, instead of being intended for the great world, which leads one to ask: Who is, then, the legislator for the world, if it be not Jesus?

centre in the direction of others. The essence of sin is selfishness; and Jesus wished to counteract this most native tendency of human nature. By getting and keeping, men seek their own happiness; but they would consult it more by doing the reverse; for, as He said in the one great saying of His found in the New Testament outside the Gospels, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Everyone grudges what his neighbour gets, imagining his own happiness to be jeopardised thereby; but, if he could be persuaded to act on the opposite assumption, he would find himself overloaded with the means of happiness; for others, surprised and astonished at his benevolence, would be melted in turn, and would radiate back the warmth received from him: "Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom." Usually this is cited as a great promise of divine giving, but, in reality, as can be seen at a glance, it is a promise of what men will do under the genial influence of unselfish treatment. The earth would be changed into a paradise if, instead of hating, human beings loved; if, instead of speaking evil of one another, they spoke only good; if, instead of grasping and holding, they gave away. It seems so simple that one often asks in perplexity why they do not do it. That is a deep mystery, but it takes us outside the sphere of Ethics. That Jesus

not only knew why, but knew, besides, the only way in which this radical evil can be cured, is proved by His great saying: "Freely ye have received, freely give." In the same way as Christian forgiveness is only possible to the forgiven, so is Christian giving only possible in proportion as anyone has experienced the infinite giving of God.

"Ye have the poor with you always," said our Lord; and this is a prophecy which has not failed of fulfilment. Every generation has been confronted by the problem of poverty in a form peculiar to itself. The form of it which the present generation has to face is not less formidable than that of any preceding age; for the problem of poverty, in our day, is, at the same time, the problem of the city, the problem of housing, the problem of unemployment. Some would add, that it is, more than any of these, the problem of drunkenness; there being comparatively little dire poverty unconnected with this cause. Others would contend that this is a partial view, drunkenness itself being not only a cause but a consequence—the consequence of insalubrious dwellings, of insufficient wages, of the hopelessness of multitudes, who, seeing no prospect of rising out of the misery in which they are sunk, plunge into intoxication to forget their sorrows. The facts are appalling and even maddening; and, for the sake of the children especially, who have to grow up in an environment of squalor and riot, the

call is loud and urgent for the betterment of social conditions. But, if Jesus said, "Woe to you that are rich," this proves that the mere improvement of outward conditions would not necessarily be a solution of the problem; for the most fortunate had no more attained the true end of life than the most unfortunate: on the contrary, their failure to do so was even more palpable. Efforts to transfer money and property from one set of hands to another may be inspired by the same passions as have blinded the present holders to their own highest good, and may be accompanied with injustice as extreme as has ever been manifested by the rich and the powerful.* It is no novelty in the world to see any class, whether high or low, standing on its rights and clamouring for its privileges; but the novelty and the miracle would be to see one forgetting its own claims and vindicating the rights of others. By the promptings of the natural heart, by the spirit of the world, and

* The fallacy in many amateur disquisitions on economic subjects, as well as in many pulpit utterances on Socialism, is the assumption that employers of labour could pay better wages to their workpeople if they were so disposed. But many, if they did so, would be employers of labour no longer; because they would be bankrupt. Those who are earning large, steady and increasing profits cannot be urged too much to consider the claims of those in their employment to a more generous share; but multitudes of employers are carrying on business in the face of keen competition, on a narrow margin of profit; and any considerable increase of their wages-bill would simply throw them out of business altogether.

by the eloquence of many an innovator, man is urged to say to his neighbour, "What is thine is mine"; but Jesus prompts him to reverse the statement and say to his neighbour, "What is mine is thine"; and St. Paul was able to describe the primitive Christians "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

It is not uncommon to try to commit Jesus as a partisan either for or against Socialism; but His words elude the attempt. Thus, the case, already quoted, in which He refused to be made a judge or a divider between two brethren seems to separate a large section of human life from the religious sphere and hand it over to the control of the civil magistrate, and it is often quoted as a reason why ministers and Church-courts should not meddle with certain subjects. But how easy it is to retort, that this is only a form of the plea of the priest and the Levite, to excuse themselves from doing anything for the man fallen amongst thieves! It is well that the words of Jesus do not settle such great issues, apart from the accumulating knowledge of the race and the growth of Christian sentiment. He will not spare us either the tasks of science or the discipline of sympathy; and it is safe to suspect the argument when either all the logic or all the sentiment appears to be on our side. There are two opposite maxims in the teaching of Jesus—"He that is not with us is against us" and "He that is not against us is

for us"—which seem to be contradictory; but the one is a safe guide for judging ourselves, and the other is equally useful in judging others; and this may supply a hint for interpreting the apparently contradictory sayings of our Lord on this subject.

If, now, we inquire what is to be given, the first answer which springs to the lips is, alms to the poor. And for this there is plenty of support in the record. Though our Lord was Himself so poor in earthly goods that He could say, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head," still a bag was kept in His company, out of which relief was dispensed to the indigent. Even when reproving the giving of alms in a wrong way, He hinted that they ought to be given in a right way—"But, when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." When exposing the ceremonies of the Pharisees, He said in so many words: "But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and, behold, all things are clean unto you." The most striking case of all is that of the rich youth whom He told to go and sell all he possessed and give to the poor, and then to come and be His follower. It is well known how, in subsequent centuries, this saying was used as the great lever of the monastic movement. Those who forsook the world for the convent and those called to ecclesiastical office began

their new career by divesting themselves as quickly as possible of all earthly possessions. But there were not wanting voices at the time giving warning of the breach of duty which this might imply, and the experience of history has passed sentence on the whole experiment of which this was a manifestation. To divest oneself at once of all property may be far easier than to expend it wisely and well, but the latter may be the use of a talent received from above and involving lifelong responsibility. The effect on the receivers, also, must be considered: when money was distributed wholesale, it is not likely to have done much good, while it may often have done harm. The rich young man's must have been a special case, in which some peculiarity of disposition or circumstances justified the treatment, and such cases may occur in any age; but the purpose of the Saviour was not to lay down the path prescribed for him as a rule for all, but to emphasize the supreme value of the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, to attain which any sacrifice is justifiable.

Money is not, however, the only thing, or even the chief thing, to be given away. Though Jesus Himself gave money, He gave far oftener sympathy, health, relief from disablement. Wherever He went, He was distributing such blessings on every hand, restoring to the diseased and deformed the power of earning money for themselves. In the Gospel of

St. Mark especially, our Lord's entire earthly career is represented as one manifold distribution of such gifts. In the same spirit He said to the Twelve, as He sent them forth: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." At the present moment the belief begins to prevail in many quarters that, had the Church continued faithful, she would never have lost a large power of overcoming disease by faith and prayer, and of communicating even to the body a more abundant life. At any rate, the flourishing of medical science under Christian auspices has placed in the hands of all desirous of assisting the poor and needy the means of relieving the victims of disease to an extent which, in former ages, could only have been accomplished by miracle; and medical missions, both home and foreign, are the most indubitable modern imitation of the daily life of Jesus.

Even this, however, does not nearly exhaust the range of the giving recommended by Jesus. It was not only upon the poor that He directed the fulness of the unselfish heart to flow forth. Unlike His forerunner, who avoided the habitations of men and abode in the wilderness, Jesus was a friend of the forms of social intercourse which tend to expansiveness and charity. His first miracle was wrought at a wedding. He accepted offers of hospitality with equal freedom from Pharisee and publican, and so unconstrained was His conduct on such occasions

as to draw down on Himself the criticism of the sour-visaged and narrow-minded, who called Him "a friend of publicans and sinners." As has been mentioned above, there has been preserved in Holy Writ an account of His table-talk on one such occasion, from which it is manifest how fully He appreciated the power of social intercourse to obliterate prejudice and suspicion and to unloose the kindlier instincts of the heart. Even courtesies still more humble were not beneath His notice, for He said: "And, if ye salute your brethren only, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans so?" And, when sending out the Twelve, He took the trouble to say to them, "And, when ye come into an house, salute it."

In the nature of the case, however, the most precious gift that can be offered to men is the Gospel. Of this Jesus proved His own appreciation when, in reply to the messengers of the Baptist, He first enumerated the works of benevolence He was engaged in performing, and then added, as the crown and climax, "And to the poor the Gospel is preached." It was the pressure of the Word within His soul that drove Him forth from Nazareth, to exchange the occupation of a carpenter for that of a preacher; and, in the description of the mission of a prophet which He read in the synagogue of Nazareth and appropriated to Himself, we learn the kind of passion which, at the beginning of His

ministry, was burning in His soul. It was this internal pressure which drove Him from one scene of sin and misery to another, and made Him say, "I must preach the Gospel to other cities also; for therefore am I sent." In such parables as those of the fifteenth of St. Luke we feel the hunger and thirst for the salvation of men which underlay His activity, while in those of the thirteenth of St. Matthew we see His estimate of the results. His personal ministry was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but, while acquiescing in the will of His Father in this arrangement, he turned wistfully to the regions beyond and anticipated the time when the Gospel would be preached in the whole world.*

The Twelve He called from the very first "to be fishers of men," thus, with His ready use of metaphor, causing their preceding experience to illuminate that which was still to come. The words in which He empowered them to perform works of mercy on men's bodies have been quoted above; but these are preceded in the record by the more solemn words, "As ye go, say, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the tenth chapter of St. Matthew and the tenth of St. Luke respectively have been preserved the addresses of instruction with which He sent forth the Twelve and the Seventy; and these are the prototypes of all the exhortations with which the messengers of peace have been sent forth, in

* Compare J. Clark Murray, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 109 ff.

the centuries since, as ministers or missionaries. The wider work which Providence did not permit Him to do in person was to be undertaken by these objects of His training, and, before He parted from them, He showed how He conceived this task, when He said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The Twelve and the Seventy were officially called to the work of evangelization; and it may have been in view of the need there would always be for men to devote their whole time and strength to the spread of His kingdom that Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." But, while official consecration may quicken and sustain the impulses from which evangelization springs, these do not belong solely to a consecrated class, but are native to the spiritual life itself. The desire to communicate the gift of salvation is natural to all who have received it themselves; and, the more any are imbued with the elementary convictions of Jesus, such as the value of the soul, the love of God for the lost, and the hopes and fears of the life to come, the more must they hunger for the awakening of their fellow-creatures and rejoice with the angels over sinners repenting. It has been the greatest error of Christendom to make the work of evangeliza-

tion the perquisite of a class; and the Gospel will never really conquer the world till all to whom the message of Christ has come with power begin to give to others the words of life eternal.

Though little dwelt upon in systems of Ethics, this obligation to evangelize lay nearer the heart of Jesus than most of those features which have been put forward as the leading characteristics of His teaching. And, even from the point of view of benevolence, its virtue goes deeper than any other service that can be rendered by man to man. While ordinary benevolence may feed the hungry and clothe the naked, evangelization enables the poor to feed and clothe themselves; because it touches the springs of manhood and self-respect and transforms the whole condition from within; and, while it does so on the small scale in the individual and the family, it does so no less on the great scale in the nation or the race; for the whole course of history ever since the Advent goes to prove that, wherever the light of the Gospel shines, the blessings of civilisation abound also. Those, therefore, in whom the spirit of Christianity prevails to such a degree as to overflow upon others are both the true disciples of Jesus and the true benefactors of humanity; and they hold in their keeping the secret of Jesus.

THE FAMILY

Matt. v. 27-30, 31, 32.
vii. 7-11.
viii. 21, 22.
ix. 14-26.
x. 21, 34-37.
xii. 46-50.
xiii. 53-58.
xv. 4-6, 19.
xix. 3-22.
xxii. 1-14, 23-33.
xxiii. 14.
xxiv. 19-38.
xxv. 1-13.

Mark i. 29-31.
ii. 19, 20.
iii. 21, 25, 31-35.
v. 19, 21-43.
vi. 3, 4.
vii. 10-12, 21, 24-30.
x. 2-12, 13-16, 19.
xii. 18-27, 41-44.
xiii. 12, 17.

Luke iv. 38, 39.
vii. 11-16.
viii. 19-21, 39, 41-56.
ix. 4.
x. 5.
xi. 7, 17, 27, 37.
xii. 13, 52, 53.
xiv. 1-35.
xv. 1-32.
xvi. 18, 27, 28.
xvii. 3, 4.
xviii. 1-8, 20, 29.
xix. 44.
xx. 27-38, 47.
xxi. 1-4, 16, 23.
xxiii. 28-31.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAMILY

SIX-AND-THIRTY years after the appearance of *Ecce Homo* there was published another exposition of the ethical teaching of Christ in the English language not unworthy to be named in the same breath with that famous book. It was from the pen of Professor Peabody, of Harvard, and it bears the title, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question.* In one respect it exhibits a close resemblance to its predecessor; because the method of exposition is by constant comparison with a rival system, with all the ramifications of which the author is intimately acquainted. Only the literature made use of by Professor Peabody, for this illustration of contrast, is extremely different from that on which the author of *Ecce Homo* fixed attention; for, while the latter used for his purpose the remains of classical antiquity, the other makes an exhaustive comparison of the Christian ethical system with that of modern Socialism. Perhaps in both cases a carping critic might complain that the author betrays a more comprehensive knowledge

of the system with which he compares the scheme of Christianity than with the latter itself;* but there can be no doubt in this newer case, any more than in the earlier, of the utility of the method; and the interest at present felt in Socialism makes the whole discussion eminently fresh and timely.†

The point at which Professor Peabody seems to feel, and his readers also will generally feel, the most painful collision between the Socialistic and the Christian doctrines is the family. The author begins by showing how the sacredness of this institution has been shaken in his own country by the excessive prevalence of divorce, which has been

* It is in the companion volume, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, that the limitations of this able and delightful author's theological position are most apparent. The Christian Ethic is an ethic of motive—this is its peculiar quality—and there are motives springing from belief in the transcendental history of the Son of God which have given rise to the heroisms of Christianity, such as those of its martyrs and missionaries. It is historically certain that those who have by such acts of faith made the modern Christian world what it is put the full testimony of the Church into the confession, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me"; and it has still to be seen whether those who have taken out of this testimony the major part of its contents are capable of similar performances. But it is not gracious to be grumbling that an author who has given so much in such an admirable manner has not given more.

† In Newman Smyth's deliverances on the Social Question, *Christian Ethics*, pt. ii., c. 4, there is also a maturity rarely met with in utterances on the subject on this side; suggesting that, on that side of the Ocean, they have had to reflect on this subject for a much longer time than we.

growing from decade to decade, reasons more and more frivolous being allowed by the courts to disrupt the bonds of marriage, until, as I see from the very latest statistics just published, there is now one divorce to every twelve marriages. Even in the face of such facts Professor Peabody endeavours not to despair of his native country, pointing out that it is only a minority of the population which has been thus vitiated; the majority, on the contrary, being sound, and knowing of such practices only as dwellers far inland may hear from a distance the tumult which is disturbing the ocean; and it is reassuring to learn that an observer so sane and well-informed is able to take so sanguine a view of the situation. He proceeds to specify, as another disposing cause, the recent course of scientific investigation into the origins of marriage. The natural history of the changes through which this relation has passed in the obscure early history of the race is apt to breed the belief that it is a mere convention, which, having altered its form many times already, may alter it again to an indefinite extent.* In this spirit the speculations on primitive conditions of Westermarck, McLennan and others have been

* Balch, *Introduction to the Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 203, says, perhaps rather sanguinely, "Whatever be the prehistoric origin of morality, its authority is independent of its method of genesis."

utilised by those who look upon the sacredness attaching to marriage in the popular mind as one of the principal obstacles standing in the way of the new era which they hope to introduce; and thus has been generated what is held by such to be the true and the modern doctrine on the subject: the family is, like the State and the Church, merely a venerable figment, the underlying conception of which cannot stand the light of scientific investigation; and all three—State, Church and family—are destined to be swept away together.

This is the voice of Continental Socialism, to the literature of which the author gives references which leave no doubt that beliefs of this kind are being diffused by propagandists among the labouring classes of such countries as France and Germany. In our own country, on the contrary, it is worthy of remark, not a few of the spokesmen of Socialism have repudiated this creed as regards the family. I have heard Stoecker, the late originator of the Christian Socialist party in Germany, declare his conviction that the atheism of the German working man was extremely superficial, being little more than a fashion of speech adopted from leaders; and it may be that the hostility to the family is no deeper. At all events, Englishmen are swayed far more than either Frenchmen or Germans by practical considerations; and it would not be wise to hold those who profess socialistic opinions to all the

consequences of their principles. On the other hand, principles have a way of working themselves out, if time be allowed; there is a logic in things which lies beyond the will of the conscious reasoner; and, therefore, it is not a matter of no moment to determine whether or not, in its essence, Socialism is irreconcilable with the family. I suppose, the argument of those who believe that it is would be, that the family is inconceivable without the existence of private property to an extent not allowed by a strict and consistent Socialism; and, also, that the very idea of the family involves an hereditary transmission both of property and other advantages inconsistent with the equality which is one of the principal planks of Socialism. Into such theoretical inquiries, however, this is hardly the place to enter; and I will not at present pursue the subject further.

Although Christianity has a great deal to do with the home in nearly every aspect in which it can be considered, nevertheless marriage is not an institution which owes its origin to Christianity. It existed long before the Advent. Neither is its authority to be sought among the enactments of the Mosaic legislation. On the contrary, it is a purely human institution, having its ground and reason in creation. This was acknowledged by our Lord Himself, when, in reply to the cavils of the Pharisees, He answered:

"Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined let not man put asunder." Marriage thus belongs to the primitive condition of human existence, and is inherent in the human constitution. In its essence, it is due to the choice of the twain by each other, and, while the sanction of State or Church may be grounded on the best of reasons, it is something added, not the constitutive element in the union. The State demands publicity, in order that the new home may be registered in proper form in the circle of civilisation over which it watches; and the Church claims the right to perform the ceremony, because the blessing of God is the protection of the home; but both of these are only confirmatory of what the parties themselves do by their own choice. State and Church can lend dignity and sacredness to the covenant of nature; but it is criminal when the State places unnecessary or arbitrary obstacles in the way of marriage, and the Church is still more culpable if it terrorises weak consciences by casting suspicion upon forms of marriage which are sufficient, in the eyes of God and man.*

* By the recent decisions of the Roman Curia on this subject, Roman Catholics who are married to Protestants before a civil

In His quotation from Genesis our Lord makes reference to that mysterious attraction not only between the sexes, but between individuals in the opposite sexes, which draws them into marriage. It is stronger than the attraction that binds to the homes from which the pair are drawn away to found a new one—"A man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife." No wonder the Saviour alluded to this passion with such high appreciation; for, if the aim of Christianity is to purge the heart of selfishness, it can find in the world nothing so akin to itself as pure love between the sexes, which carries the person possessed with it completely out of himself and makes all sacrifices for the sake of the beloved object easy. In some, no doubt, this is transient, the mere blazing up of a flame which is soon extinguished. But in multitudes of cases it is enduring. The choice is a permanent one, and the union only becomes more close and sacred the longer it lasts. If to first love, as it is called, there attaches a beauty which has

official or by a Protestant minister are told by the priest that their wedlock is invalid, and that they are living in a state of concubinage. This is the more reprehensible because, as is hinted not obscurely in the recent episcopal pastorals, the irregularity can be circumvented by a money payment at Rome. Of a piece with this is the notorious fact that in some Catholic countries the fees charged by the clergy for the celebration of marriage are so high as to be prohibitive to numbers of the poor, and so prove the occasion for the formation of irregular connections.

evoked the enthusiasm of poets and romancers, the love of old age is not less beautiful, when it has survived all the changes and chances of life, only becoming mellower with the passage of the years.

There is a sensuous element in this passion, to which our Lord did not scruple to refer, when He quoted: "And they two shall be one flesh." Indeed, in this part of human life, the ideal and unselfish remains for ever linked with the animal and egoistic; and the history of civilisation itself as well as of Christianity might be written in terms of the prevalence of the one element or the other.* Innumerable influences are forever at work, in all lands, to evoke and impel the animal element in this passion, while others are, at the same time, working on behalf of the ideal element. This is a struggle incessantly going on, not only in society at large, but in every bosom; and the result determines from stage to stage the station and degree both of the nation and of the man. In custom, opinion and literature, not only is there a championship of the flesh which is hurtful, but there may be an exaltation of the ideal or spiritualised which is morbid also. It requires fine taste and discrimination to divine where the happy mean lies; and this is a knowledge which

* I have heard Dr. Laws, with his unsurpassed knowledge of savage peoples, remark that the place of any race on the upward or the downward scale can be accurately measured by their relation to two of the Ten Commandments—the fifth and the seventh.

has to be acquired gradually by both the individual and the race. The contrast, for example, between the conception of love prevalent in the English literature of the eighteenth century and in that belonging to the middle of the nineteenth century may serve as an illustration of how radically the sentiments of a people on this subject may change; and there can be no doubt that, in this case, the change was due to the revival of earnest religion which had taken place between these dates. The services of those who, by their descriptions of this portion of human life in imaginative literature, are making the advances towards marriage more pure and refined may not always be consciously rendered to Christ; but there are few services which accord better with His aims and spirit.

It is true, however, that the attraction referred to between the parties to a marriage is not the only consideration which ought to weigh in coming to a decision. There are numerous other circumstances which require to be taken into account, such as health, the lawful claims of other relationships, the ability to support a household, and so on. A reckless disregard of these may make marriage a source not of happiness, but the reverse; just as, on the contrary, an excessive regard for secondary considerations, such as money, may do equal harm in another way. Still it is pure affection that is the prime guarantee of success in this relationship, and

it is to the absence or extinction of it that the failure of marriage is oftenest due. Those in whom the ideal element has been absent, at the contraction of marriage, find themselves not in a paradise, as they had expected, but in a trap, when the ebullition of animal passion has subsided, as it easily does, or has been transferred to another object; and those who have married for money or position find themselves confronted by a prospect scarcely less dreary. It is out of errors of this kind that the demand for divorce arises. Moses, for the hardness of the hearts of the people with whom he had to deal—that is, to prevent worse from happening—afforded facility for putting-away; and the same course has been followed by too complaisant governments in both ancient and modern times. But Jesus laid an arrest on this course; and, wherever His name is respected, His authority will sway opinion and legislation towards a purer standard.

In two of the Gospels where this is referred to, Jesus is reported as forbidding divorce altogether; but in St. Matthew He makes an exception, "for the cause of fornication"; and this, some maintain, must have been understood, even if it had not been expressed, because this sin, in point of fact, dissolves the union. Others have interpreted Him in the opposite direction, holding this to be only a specimen reason, which implies others of the same kind, such as desertion, which St. Paul seems to allow to

be sufficient. It is well that, in circles where Christian sentiment is earnest and pure, the necessity for knowing much about such fine discriminations seldom arises; and, while any considerable acquaintance with actual life will reveal many cases of hardship, where selfishness and cruelty take refuge behind the veil of the domestic reticences, yet the general observation cannot be ignored that, whatever the relief to the individual which laxity might give, it would be purchased too dearly by the blow inflicted on the structure of society itself.

This divine institution aims not only at the union of two for their mutual comfort and improvement, but likewise, as the English Marriage Service says, exists for "the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord and to the praise of His holy name." This is an aspect of human life on which Jesus cast a most sympathetic and comprehending eye. When speaking of the destruction of the temple and of the calamities that would ensue, He glanced with pity at the women who might be with child or nursing their infants at such a period of distress; and, when the women followed Him on the way to the cross, He turned to them, saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for, if these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Many of

His miracles were wrought on children, being, as in the cases of Jairus' daughter and the daughter of the Syrophœnician Woman, accompanied by exquisite touches of humanity towards the parents. A favourite name of His for God was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in using which He had evidently in mind the promise enshrined in this ancient phrase, that piety may descend in the home from generation to generation. By the scene in which He blessed the little children He took possession forever of the heart not only of childhood but of motherhood; and it would be difficult to exaggerate the revolution in the condition of children and the estimation in which they are held which has been due to this incident alone. In all the centuries since, the words then uttered by Him have been working like a leaven, and their virtue is not yet by any means exhausted.

Jesus did not, however, merely view domestic life sympathetically from the outside: He was a member of a human family and bore Himself as a son of man in the several relations which this involved.

When He was twelve years of age, it is expressly said, He went down from Jerusalem with His parents to Nazareth, and "was subject unto them." Not only, in His doctrine, did He rebuke those who excused themselves, by pious gifts to public religion, from doing aught for their fathers and mothers, but, in the article of death, He turned His attention away from

His own sufferings, with all their mysterious import, in order to make provision for the future support and comfort of His mother, whom He placed in the hands of the most loving and comprehending of His disciples.

The relationship of brother and brother, or of brother and sister, is one in which there lie many possibilities; and Jesus showed His appreciation of these by associating, in more than one case, brother and brother in the list of His apostles. To Himself personally this relationship proved for long a source of tragic pain; because His own brethren did not believe in Him—a circumstance which lends peculiar pathos to the saying, "A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." If, in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus represented even Dives as concerned for his five brethren, lest they also should come into the place of torment, we cannot be wrong in persuading ourselves that He must Himself have prayed and striven for the conversion of His unbelieving brethren. To the day of His death they, nevertheless, remained in opposition; and it is not unlikely that others may have taken encouragement from them to persevere in rejecting His claims. As soon as He had risen from the dead, Jesus resumed the effort to save His brethren, His haste betraying the pressure with which this anxiety had always lain upon His heart. One of His first appearances was

to James; and so convincing did the evidence thus brought to bear on the mind of the doubter prove that not only did he himself at once abandon his unbelief and throw in his lot with the cause of his Brother, but the rest of the household yielded to conviction at the same time, presenting themselves among the other representatives of the cause the first time, after the Resurrection, these rallied in an upper room at Jerusalem; and two of the brothers lived to be authors of New Testament Scriptures.

But this long-continued opposition on the part of the brethren of Jesus was only the most outstanding instance of collision between Jesus and His earthly relations, which manifested itself also in other ways. There is a slight indication as early as the incident in the temple, when He was twelve years of age, of a dissonance between Him and His parents: it is evident that He then became aware of a call, which they were unable to hear but He felt He could not disregard. In all homes there comes a date, differing, indeed, in different cases and seldom clearly marked in the calendar, at which the authority of parents has to relax its hold and the children take their destiny into their own hands; but parents sometimes do not submit with grace to this inevitable change, attempting to exercise their right too long, while children, on the other hand, to their own peril, may grasp at emancipation too soon. In the case of a character as original as Jesus, it was inevitable that

the yoke should be slipped and that He should brook no interference with the plan of His life, after it had been clearly formulated in His own mind. But this was not understood by those to whom according to the flesh He appertained. At one stage, when His absorption in His work was such as to excite the alarm of His people, these* "went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself." If His mother took any part in this unseemly attempt, it is no wonder that, when next she approached Him as if she had a right to interrupt His work and call Him away to attend to her at pleasure, she experienced a sharp rebuke. In St. Mark it is immediately after the incident just referred to, that Mary and His brethren come, in the midst of His teaching, and, standing without, desire speech with Him. This being signified to Him by those standing near, He exclaimed, "Who is My mother or My brethren?" And He looked round about on them that sat about Him and said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister and mother." The effect of this may have been modified by its being pronounced with a smile; and it shows how close and tender He felt the natural relation to be that He compared the new spiritual one to it; yet this was a distinct preference of the relationship formed by discipleship to that due to nature.

* οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ.

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of the subsequent progress of the Gospel: "For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law"—an anticipation which is fulfilling itself down to the present hour, in missions to the Orient, for example, where the ties of home are so enveloping that it is easier to break through any other obstacle for the purpose of making a Christian profession. He drew a still more ghastly picture of the effects of the collision of the demands of His Gospel and the claims of the family, when He said, "The brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death"; but the fulfilment of this prophecy also could be amply confirmed from the records of times of persecution.

The drift of all this is unmistakeable. When the call of the Gospel comes into conflict with the claims of the family, Jesus requires that the former should prevail. He is Lord of the conscience. Much may be said, and ought to be said, about the need that, in such cases, the conscience should be an adult conscience, and an instructed one;

also, much may be said of the unfounded claims of pretended lords of the conscience to speak in His name; yet, when all is said, the course which conscience must take is clear—it must acknowledge and obey its Lord.

To work out all that is implied in this claim, from a dogmatic point of view, does not belong to our present purpose; it lies pretty evidently on the surface. But here I shall only add, that Jesus honoured the relation of parenthood by using it as the earthly image for His own relation, as well as His people's, to the Father in heaven; and that He honoured the relation of husband and wife by calling Himself, as we have already seen He did, the Bridegroom, the bride being the Church, and by shadowing forth the same truth in the parable of the King who made a Marriage for his Son.

THE STATE

Matt. x. 18.
xii. 25.
xv. 24.
xvii. 24-27.
xviii. 23-35.
xxii. 1-14.
xxiv. 6.

Mark ii. 14-17.
iii. 24.
iv. 19.
vi. 8, 9.
vii. 27.
viii. 36, 37.
ix. 33-37.
x. 17-31, 33, 34, 35-45.
xi. 15-19, 27-33.
xii. 1-44.
xiii. 7-12, 32-37.
xiv. 3-11, 62.
xv. 2.

Luke iv. 16-32.
v. 4-7, 27-32.
vi. 3, 4, 30.
vii. 1-10, 25.
viii. 14.
ix. 3-5, 22.
x. 4, 7, 41.
xi. 3, 17.
xii. 11-30.
xiii. 16, 34, 35.
xiv. 18, 19, 31-33.
xvi. 1-31.
xvii. 7-10.
xviii. 18-32.
xix. 1-27, 30, 31, 41-44.
xx. 1-8, 9-26, 41-47.
xxi. 9, 10, 12, 24-26.
xxii. 35.
xxiv. 47.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STATE

HOWEVER much a Christian may dwell in an ideal world, yet it is ordained by nature herself that he must touch the earth. Man may not live by bread alone, but, on the other hand, he cannot live without bread. However he may make even the act of eating sacramental by accompanying it with the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," yet the necessity of eating tethers everyone to this material world. Still more when a man has to provide for others does this necessity urge itself as irresistible. When asked for bread, a father cannot give a stone; he must have wherewith to satisfy the hungry mouths that call to him for the means of subsistence. Clothing has to be provided as well as food; and the shelter of a roof is also, in most parts of the globe, a necessity, and often one far from easy to provide. For these reasons man must sow and reap, weave and build.

In ages long before the point at which human records begin, it must have been discovered that the provision of the elementary necessities can be

facilitated by the division of labour. From this it was but a step to the exchange of the values which labour had produced. Then came the invention of money as a substitute and tender for articles. And, with these three attainments, man was on the path to that vast multiplication of tasks of which modern society consists. Society is an organism in which every individual ought to find his own place and do his own part of the general work.

As society thus develops, its members are not content with the satisfaction of the elementary necessities. Not only food is desired, but good food; not only a garment, but a beautiful one; not only a house, but a comfortable one. Besides, the work reacts on the worker, who is healthy and happy in proportion as he is usefully occupied, and grows in personal refinement the finer the thought and the more sustained the pains he puts into the labour of his hands. The earth, as a whole, assumes forms of beauty in proportion to the care bestowed on its cultivation; and by degrees there arises in the mind of the race the conception of the whole planet, which is its habitation, transmuted into a scene of happiness through the joint action of all its inhabitants.*

There are many sayings of Jesus which show how deep was His insight into this side of human

* This is very nearly the conception of the ethical vocation of the race as a whole expounded by Schleiermacher and Rothe.

life. The nobleman, in the parable, about to travel into a far country divides his means among his servants, who are to trade with his money in his absence; the husbandman, in like manner, leaves his vineyard in charge of the vinedressers, with strict orders to be able to deliver the fruits in their season. In the parable of the Talents the observation is made prominent that some are gifted for tasks and positions for which others are unfit, and that from each will be demanded service in proportion to his abilities. From the same parable and from other sayings of Jesus we gather that He looked upon nothing with more dislike than the failure to make use of talents. There are to be no drones in the social hive. It is possible, indeed, that, through the favour of fortune, some may be relieved from the common tasks in which others have to toil without ceasing; but, if so, they must find other occupations in which they may be helpful in promoting the general weal. While the less favoured may find it excuse enough for idleness, that no man hath hired them, the more highly favoured ought to be able to find employment for themselves.*

* Most of the modern writers on Christian Ethics are very strong in the demand that everyone must have a sphere to fill and a work to do, idleness being criminal. See, for instance, the latest great work published in Germany on the subject, Lemme's *Christliche Ethik*, II., pp. 39 ff. So Dorner, *Christliche Sittenlehre*, p. 526, "Es darf keinen Stand geben, dessen Arbeit nur der Genuss ist."

At all events, when the final account is made up, a full equivalent in work for all talents bestowed will be demanded.

This realm of duties, which society is, has, for its counterpart, a realm of rights, which society is likewise. He who plucks the fruit eats it, and much more is he who grows it entitled to do the same. He who goes a-fishing finds, through his vigilance and skill, enough not only for himself but for his household. Each one's enjoyment is not, however, confined to what he can himself grow or catch. He who has made a catch of fish may be said to have captured fruit also; for the possessor of the fruit will be happy to let him have part of it for part of the fish. Thus may all the inhabitants of the earth be said to have among them not only its products but its potentialities; and by labour well directed, in which everyone bears his own part, there should be enough for all.

But here comes in the difficulty of determining the shares. Some, because they have better talents or more conscientiousness, and so render more service, are entitled to a larger or finer share. Besides, the principle of heredity causes the share of some to accumulate from generation to generation, so that the later-born obtain the advantage of the virtue of their predecessors. Some have dreamed of overlooking both of these distinctions; but society must beware of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The larger and finer share given to the one who contributes more than others of labour and duty is a stimulus to work ; and so is the hope of leaving what has been gained to those who come after. Indeed, these are the two principles upon which the forward and upward movement of society depends.

It is, however, a very different thing when the powerful, by mere violence and injustice, appropriate that which they have never earned, and transmit it to their offspring. This has been the great blot on human history : the powerful have forgotten their duties and forgotten their brotherhood, and thought of nothing but possession and enjoyment. Hence the tears of which the centuries have been full, and hence the wrongs which have so accumulated that no man can say fully what is right and what is wrong in the actual condition of the world.

With this side of human life, also, the sayings of Jesus prove Him to have been profoundly conversant. In so many words He says, " The labourer is worthy of his hire " ; and, in one of the parables, a husbandman, hiring labourers for his work, says to those standing in the market-place, " Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." In other parables He represents honest and faithful work as being handsomely rewarded, and success in one function as opening up the way to employment more remunerative. This principle is expressed with emphasis in a saying of which

He appears to have been specially fond—the observation that, to him who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but that from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. To some minds this may seem a cruel arrangement, especially the latter part of it; but it is a fact of of everyday occurrence; and Jesus was true to natural law.

He is sometimes supposed to be speaking in the opposite sense when, in a parable already alluded to, He represents the rest of the labourers, whatever has been the length of their day's work—even though they have only laboured a single hour—as receiving exactly as much as those who have borne the burden and heat of the day. Here, it is contended, He is teaching a novel economical principle, to the effect that the labourers were sufficiently excused for their idleness by the fact that no man had hired them, and that all willing to work are entitled to the like wage, because the true rule is, From each, work according to his powers; to each, pay according to his necessities. It is certainly interesting that the teaching of Jesus is capable of being aligned in this way along with the most recent theories; but it must remain questionable if this was His meaning. The very point of His teaching seems rather to be, that God can act with a generosity which is neither, as a rule, possible nor even desirable in human affairs. It is of similar

import with another deep word, in which Jesus advises His disciples, after they have done their very utmost, to say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done what it was our duty to do." Claims of right extend from man to man, not from man to God.

Thus is human life a twofold realm of duties on the one hand and rights on the other; and the State is a device for watching over the whole, with a view to see that all are doing their duties and that all are obtaining their rights. Like the family, the State is not a creation of Christianity: it existed long before the appearance of our Lord on earth. It is not even religious in origin, but seems to be a primitive product of human nature. Among philosophers there has, indeed, been the utmost diversity of opinion as to how it has actually arisen, some taking an optimistic and others a pessimistic view of its origin. At the opposite extremes are Hegel and Augustine: Hegel called the State the realisation of the moral ideal; Augustine said that states were *magna latrocinia.* The State is a kind of rough and elementary morality. Its soul is law; and its instruments are punishments. The law of the State is a rough copy of the law of the conscience. Hence those who live according to conscience have little or nothing to do with the law, of the very existence of which they may not think once in a twelvemonth. Those who have to do with it are the lawless and

disobedient, who are thinking about it all the time. But the law of the State is ever changing; and so it may be brought closer and closer to the law of conscience. The less of law the better, some think; the State, according to such thinkers, has only negative functions; it is only intended to secure the well-doing from interference.* Others ascribe to it much wider functions; and the tendency at present is to allow it to encroach on the territory of the family and the Church. Hobbes in the Leviathan represented the State as an official, in whose hands all men had placed all their possessions, when they found they were like to destroy one another in the struggle for them, empowering him to distribute to all according to his own judgment and will. But too often has this authority betrayed his trust; for he has used for his own purposes the goods which he ought to have administered for the general welfare.

If the law be, as has been stated above, an elementary morality, Christianity, the religion of conscience, must be akin to it and must be capable of being served by it. It is, accordingly, extraordinary how optimistic a view was taken by early Christianity of the law, as well as of the government by which it was administered, even when the law and government in question were those of pagan and cruel Rome. St. Paul suffered much at the hands of Roman officials, and, in all probability, he

* Nietzsche: "So wenig Staat wie möglich."

at last fell a victim to the fury of a persecuting government; yet even of this government he speaks in terms of profound respect, ordering Christians to render it obedience, because it is a minister for good, a terror to evildoers and a praise to them that do well, and calling upon them to pray for it, in order that, under its auspices, they may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. St. Paul must have had a profound sense of how much better any strong government is than anarchy, as well as a painful experience of how dangerous it is to fall into the tender mercies of the mob, when he was able to speak thus of a system against which it would have been easy, from his own recollections, to construct a formidable indictment.

Not dissimilar is the attitude of Jesus. He lived under three governments—that of Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, that of the Romans, and that of the Jews—and painful it is to observe, as we follow His career step by step, that He is never brought into contact with any of these without suffering injustice. Pilate, the representative of the Roman power, indeed, tried to protect Him from the malice of the Jews; but it was only for a moment that law, in his hands, did honour to its native fairness and majesty; for, as soon as his own interests appeared to be threatened through the endeavour to protect the Innocent, he gave way to the fanaticism of the officials and the demands of the mob, and sur-

rendered the Accused to the will of His persecutors. The final scenes were a travesty of justice and the gravest exhibition the world has ever seen of unrighteousness masquerading in the garb of legality. Nevertheless, the attitude of Jesus all along to law and government was one of respect. When He was challenged by the Zealots to say whether or not it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar—the intention being either to involve Him with the government if He answered the one way, or to deal a fatal blow at His popularity with the masses if He answered in the other—He did not hesitate to run the latter risk by making His famous reply, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." By Von Ranke this has been called the greatest of all the sayings of our Lord; this being an historian's estimate; for the whole of modern history may be looked upon as a series of experiments to ascertain what is Cæsar's and what is God's. It was singularly characteristic of Him who uttered it; for it did not directly and in so many words answer the question, but put His opponents into the hole into which they had tried to push Him. Still, it was full of respect, and even of a kind of awe, for the great power referred to. Similarly, when challenged to pay the temple tax to the local Jewish authority, He did so, although accompanying the act by an assertion of His right to refuse, expressed in terms in which the lightest

banter was combined with a grave and solemn meaning.* The only lawful authority to which He displayed something like contempt was that of His own prince, whom He called "that fox," when warned of his intention to kill Him, and whom He refused to grace with a single word of recognition, when He stood at his bar; but the behaviour of this unmanly tyrant to His friend and forerunner, the Baptist, is enough to explain and to justify the rebuke; and the silence of the Saviour was intended to speak louder than any words in the conscience of the husband of Herodias.†

Jesus was, indeed, well enough aware of the difference between the spirit which He had come to breathe into the atmosphere of humanity and that which generally inspires the conduct of kings—just as well as He was aware of the contrast between

* By taxation the State is supplied with the means necessary for carrying on its operations. Perhaps by nothing else is the enormous power wielded by the State made so manifest as by the money it can put into any scheme which it has on hand. Slow and laborious are the efforts of voluntary liberality in comparison with what can be done by those who are able to dip their hands into the public purse.

† There was, however, a deeper reason. Herod was coming between Him and His duty to God; and He who had said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," had said also, "Render unto God the things which are God's." There is a region into which human law and government dare not intrude —the domain of conscience. Of freedom of conscience this great saying is the Magna Charta, observes Jacoby, *Neutestamentliche Ethik*, p. 130.

the garb and fare of the Baptist and the habits of those who live "delicately" in kings' courts. "Ye know," said He to the disciples, "that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but, whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and, whosoever is chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." This is one of the utterances which have turned the world upside down; it is performing this process still; and it will be doing so till the end of time. The dispute among the Twelve, occasioned by the ambitious request of James and John, abetted by their mother Salome, shows how foreign the sentiment was at the time even to the inner circle of those about Jesus, being the possession of Himself alone. But it shines by its own light; and, however slow may be the process by which it breaks through the mists of selfishness and evil custom, it is bound to win acceptance more and more. It is a new ideal of greatness. As embodied in the practice of kings and courts, greatness was measured by the service which could be demanded and obtained from the largest number of inferiors, ready to bend the knee to the superior's orders; but kingliness, according to Jesus, consists in the very reverse—in the amount of service anyone is

able, in virtue of high position, to render, and the number of human beings he is able to benefit. What an inversion! Yet in every breast there is something which responds to it; and, in every age since this was uttered, there have been those placed high in the social scale who have looked for greatness in no other direction. In this case, however, as in so many others, Jesus was the perfect fulfiller of His own maxim. In the wilderness He was tempted to seek greatness of the usual kind; on His trial He was able to answer in the affirmative when asked whether He were the King of the Jews; yet He steadily pursued Himself the course He laid down for others—that of ministering, not being ministered unto—and He gave His life a ransom for many.

One aspect of the State which meant much for Jesus was its connection with a nation and a country. This brings into play the feelings of patriotism, which are nursed by such circumstances as the beauty of a country and the memories of great characters and noble actions enshrined in its history. It might have been thought, *a priori*, that Jesus was too spiritual for such sentiments, and some have represented Him as being too conscious of His identity with all humanity to stoop to any race or locality. But His words and acts have only to be recalled to prove the contrary. The beauty of the landscapes of Galilee glows forever in His words, and we have the same evidence that all

the habits and customs of the population amidst which He grew up lived in His affectionate and admiring observation. Even in doing His peculiar work, He could, as has been remarked already, give it as a reason for exerting His powers that the victim of disease was a daughter or the victim of Pharisaic contempt a son of Abraham. The great names of the country's past and the great scenes of its history were continually on His lips. But, if all other evidence of the kind were lacking, the dirge pronounced by Him over the capital of the country would be sufficient to prove how deeply the name of His native land was written on His heart: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that art sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

This preference for one country did not, however, in His mind imply any disparagement or enmity towards others. Whenever, during His short life, Jesus was brought into contact with foreigners, the impressions were mutually cordial. In almost His last words on earth He charged His disciples to evangelize all nations—that is, to bind them together in the bonds of the Gospel. But, as, among the countrymen of Jesus, the Mosaic command to love one's neighbour was construed as if it were at the same time a permission to hate one's enemy, so has love of one's own country been supposed to be best

evinced by hostility to all other countries, which were to be attacked and plundered whenever the opportunity occurred of doing so with success. One of the principal vocations of the State is acknowledged to be the defence of the territory of the nation from foreign invasion, the citizens being bound to sacrifice to this object not only their means and services but, if need be, their lives.* The raising of armies for this purpose has, however, often proved a pretext to cover designs of a totally different complexion; and the standing armies of modern states are a constant menace to the peace of the world. On the construction of arms and armaments the money produced by industry is poured out like water. Myriads of precious lives are abstracted from the blessed pursuits of peace and, in the army and navy, shut up in a strenuous idleness hardly better than was that of the monastery. On one war, begun in the last year of the nineteenth century, England spent more than she did on Foreign Missions during the whole of that century, though it is proudly called the Century of Missions. Could anything be more childish than the plea on which at the present moment the Christian countries—even the Protestant countries—are squandering millions on the building of armaments and battleships, the one doing it

* All that can be said by way of arrest on the obvious and petulant objections to war will be found in a sermon on War in Mozley's *University Sermons.*

simply because the other is doing it? This insane cultivation of the art of war is the reproach and breakdown of statesmanship. There was once a time when every man protected his own life and property, avenging his own wrong with arms in his hands; but civilisation has ended that condition of things, by taking the arms out of the hands of the individual and placing them in those of the State, which undertakes the individual's righteous cause. Similarly, not so very long ago, the inhabitants of every few square miles of country were armed against all their surrounding neighbours and raided the adjoining lands at every opportunity. But civilisation has taken the arms out of the hands of the clans and compelled all living inside the State to trust their defence to the law. This is civilisation. But the relations of states to states are still on the basis of barbarism, the European nations confronting one another armed to the teeth. It is for statesmanship to devise a remedy for this condition of things; and it is a shame that it has not been found long ago. It seems to lie in the direction of arbitration—that is, the organization of all the civilised nations into a high Areopagus, to decide the quarrels of individual states and enforce these decrees by the irresistible will of all. But no such device will ever be permanently successful without the diffusion through the communities to be thus united of the spirit of Him at whose birth the angels sang, "Peace on earth, good-will to men."

EPILOGUE

"O LORD," says St. Augustine, "give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt." And such must be the sentiment, at the close of an exposition like the foregoing, of every earnest and intelligent reader. Christ must give what He demands, or He demands far more than can possibly be given by those to whom His demands are addressed. When the inward and searching nature of His legislation is realised, and the height and scope are appreciated of the character and service to which He calls mankind—especially when it is perceived that His ethical teaching includes duties to God as well as duties to man, and not only performance in the life which now is but constant preparation for that which is to come—despair must seize upon the human spirit, unless in the teaching of the Master there is, besides the imperative of morality, a promise of supernatural grace and assistance. It has not been the direct business of the present volume to set this forth —it was attempted in the former volume on His teaching concerning Himself—but it has been everywhere assumed ; and it recurs ever and anon in the

record, culminating in the invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus lifts up a far higher standard than any other ethical teacher; but little would He deserve the name of Saviour if this were all He did. To demand that vastly more should be produced out of human nature than had ever been expected from it can be wise and beneficent only if first there is vastly more put into it. And it is because the Saviour does this—because He is the Giver of the ethical life which He demands—that we adore Him by a name which is above every name.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF JESUS *

IT is obvious that for very many people to-day of all creeds and classes the question of vital importance is what is conveniently called the Social Problem, the problem raised by poverty, unemployment, drunkenness, and kindred evils, as well as, more generally, by extreme social inequalities, with their consequent disabilities, favoured by our present social order. It is not only that great masses of men and women are looking forward with intense ardour to a reconstructed society in which the heavy burdens at present lying on them will be lifted, and they themselves will enter a new world of freedom and happiness;

* Some of the younger ministers and elders of the Church to which I belong have been interesting themselves deeply in the social problem and, under the encouragement of the General Assembly, putting themselves into touch with working men, for the purpose of comprehending their point of view, as well as ascertaining at first hand the actual facts of the case. My minister, the Rev. Fred. J. Rae, M.A., being one of these, I have asked him to be good enough to write out his views; and, he having had the kindness to do so, these are here printed without any alteration whatever; not because I entirely agree with them, but because the question is urgent, being in the thoughts of earnest people at present all the world over; and it is right that the views of fresh and sympathetic minds, trying to understand the message of the Master for our modern conditions, should find expression.

but others also, who have nothing to gain by any change, are concerning themselves seriously with the same questions. In our own time the centre of gravity of interest and urgency is being largely transferred from the intellectual to the social sphere. The change has taken place in the last twenty years. One can easily remember when the questions of absorbing interest were entirely theological. But now they are chiefly economic. Questions of theology will never cease to interest men, but at present they have been displaced from their supreme position. The thing that presses is the cry of the great multitude of the hungry, the poor and the distressed; and the worth of the Christian Gospel is being measured by its power to answer this cry. What we are facing is the emergence of a new social conscience, new at least in the extent of its influence, raising grave issues and making urgent demands, and above all applying its own tests to existing systems both religious and political. Now, in this situation two questions at once present themselves of critical importance, both of which need a much clearer answer than they have hitherto received. First of all, what is the mind of Jesus about this problem? did He raise such questions at all? do His life and His teaching give us any clear guidance in relation to them? And secondly, What is the duty of the Church in this crisis? do such problems concern her? and, if they do, in what way, and to what extent? The present paper is an attempt to suggest some answer to both these questions. It will deal, first, with the social teaching of Jesus; then, on the basis of the conclusions reached, with the present duty of the Christian Church.

I

Perhaps the most significant part of the social teaching of Jesus is to be found in the plain facts of His life. His mind is to be read as much, if not more, in what He was and what He did as in what He said. And while that is true in regard to other matters, it has special force here, since the questions raised by the social problem concern the ordinary life of men. Now, when we examine the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, we find three facts of great importance in the present connection.

1. He was a Poor Man. He was born and brought up in a working-class home. His friends were mainly working men, peasants and fisher folk. When He became a public teacher, He was apparently without any means. He had not even a settled home of His own, and when He died He left nothing behind Him. The fact on which I wish to lay stress is that this life, to which the world looks as its ideal, was lived in entire independence of wealth and position. We do read of a "bag," but it is clear that its contents were used chiefly for relieving the poor. In any case the wants of the disciple circle must have been simple, and easily met.

The true lesson of this fact is not its glorification of poverty, as though because Jesus was poor poverty is not an evil. This inference is wrong for one good reason among others. The poverty of a Jewish peasant at that time was a very different thing from the poverty we see in the slums of our cities to-day. It was a clean, self-respecting poverty. There was enough food, and there was always sufficient satisfaction for the needs of the day. It was possible

to live the fullest and best kind of life in such circumstances. But the poverty that is a problem to-day is a grinding, hateful, disabling thing, often insanitary, deficient in the ordinary and seemly amenities and even decencies of life, deprived of the resources necessary for anything like happiness. And even when it is not so bad as this, it means want and hunger, a bare home and constant care. One cannot hold up the poverty of Jesus to people living in such conditions and ask them to be content. His circumstances have no resemblance to theirs at all.

The social significance of this fact in the life of Jesus lies in other directions. For one thing, His independence of wealth and position shows that these things are not essential to the true life as God wills it. We may even say that simplicity and supremacy over merely external conditions are essential to this life. And if that be a true interpretation of the fact, it has a direct bearing on one feature of modern life—its passion for wealth, for material comfort and luxury. The Christian attitude to wealth and position cannot be unaffected by the fact that Jesus was indifferent to them. If this independence were imitated by His followers, some part of the urgency of the social problem would be relieved. At least a temper would be created in which the appeal of that problem would make itself heard.

But the social significance of Jesus' poverty is not exhausted by that reflection. It has a lesson of a different kind in the discouragement it offers to the idea that the true welfare of mankind is to be sought in schemes of social betterment alone. The present tendency of social thought is strongly in this direc-

tion. Socialist theories especially take little account of anything but purely material conditions. It is tacitly assumed by many writers and speakers that if physical comfort were more equally distributed all would be well, and the millennium of happiness and peace achieved at last. There is of course an important truth behind this contention. It may be admitted that the measures of reform and amelioration referred to are both important and essential. But, however urgent such measures may be for the well-being of the masses, and especially of the socially distressed among them, it is not to such measures alone we can look for the uplifting of their condition. Jesus at any rate lived chiefly for other things. His simple wants satisfied, He regarded the spiritual possessions of life as of supreme value—character, truth, and the will of God. "A man's life," He said, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." It consists rather in knowing God and living in His obedience. And therefore the poverty of Jesus supplies a needed corrective to the whole attitude of mind to social problems which leaves out the spiritual forces, and ignores their vital influence in the making of men, and even in the making of their happiness and well-being.

2. His emphasis on Joy. Jesus has often been called the Man of Sorrows, and this conception of His life has become a tradition largely owing to the influence of art. But the impression left on us by the Gospels is different. It is rather that of geniality He is often present at feasts. One of His first miracles was performed at a wedding. He was called by His enemies a "gluttonous man and a wine-bibber"; and though the words were a vile

slander, we can recognise the spirit in His life that made such a slander possible. Perhaps the two most revealing facts in this connection, however, were His own words contrasting the ascetic temper of the Baptist with His own more sunny temper (John came neither eating nor drinking, while the Son of man came eating and drinking); and His refusal to allow His disciples to fast, on the ground that the note of their lives was to be one not of gloom, but of joy. It is true Jesus was also, in a deep and precious sense, the Man of Sorrows, but the spirit of His life was one of brightness and happiness.

And not only so, but it was His aim to bring the same sunshine into the lives of others. We have just seen that He wished His disciples to have it. But this may be claimed also as the motive of His works of mercy. These beneficent deeds have been too much dealt with on their theological side. They are represented as containing a revelation of divine love. But this aspect of them may be easily over-emphasized. It tends to give the impression of Jesus as always acting in an "official" way, always doing things in a character. But if we follow the guidance of the Gospels, we receive the impression that Jesus did these gracious deeds because they were needed, and because He wished to remove from people's lives the things that prevented them rejoicing in life and in the gifts of God in the world about them. The blind, the leper, the impotent, the paralytic, the sinner, were blessed because Jesus found them disabled in one way and another from the life of joy which He Himself lived and wished others to live.

If this be a true impression, it surely vindicates for men and especially for the poorest and the

most distressed, the right to a life of happiness, a life that is free to rejoice in God and in God's world and in their own powers. Whatever ascetic element was in our Lord's teaching, He had no sympathy with the ascetic view of life. And His whole attitude to others proclaimed that He desired the joy that filled His own life to be the possession of all. Jesus wished to make men happy and to lift from them the burdens that made happiness impossible. And when we turn to the social conditions of the present day with this discovery, it surely becomes clear at once that much in them is condemned by the mind of Jesus. Multitudes of our fellow creatures are living and working under conditions that make such a life as Jesus has vindicated for all an impossibility. Sweating, unduly low wages, unemployment, bad housing, with all their sad attendant evils, are facts in our social system which in the light of this thought of Jesus are seen to be flagrantly wrong. Jesus tried tc deliver men from just such conditions as these. It is generally a precarious thing to speculate as tc what Jesus would do if He were alive to-day, but we cannot be wrong in saying that these are the evils He would set Himself to cure, in order that men and women who are oppressed by them should have a chance of living the life for which God designed them. The very existence of such evils in a society that claims to be Christian is an insupportable anomaly. Apart from any other reason, Jesus' life of joy and Jesus' ministry of joy make it imperative that there should be nothing in the lives of the poor that makes His own joy inaccessible to them, so far at least as His followers can prevent it.

3. His peculiar devotion to the outcast and oppressed classes. This is a very obvious feature of the life of Jesus. His constant preoccupation was the care of the poor, the despairing, those who were down, those who were in trouble, those who were victims of evil habit, and those who were despised or neglected. This may of course very easily be exaggerated. Renan exaggerates it when he says that the Gospel was one simply for the poor. But there is some ground for such an overstatement in the words of Jesus, especially as they are given by Luke. It is chiefly in His conduct, however, that this fact is illustrated. And about the conduct of Jesus in this respect two things are to be noted.

(1) He gave *Himself* to such people. He brought His own goodness and joy and faith into personal contact with the misery, the spiritual emptiness, and the lovelessness of their lot. This was what awakened the wonder of the publicans and the deep gratitude of the sinners. And this was the saving element in His relation to them. One might be accused of commonplace here, were it not that this is perhaps the special feature of Jesus' social teaching that needs to be most impressed on conventional Christianity to-day. One of the most serious facts in our present situation is the division between the West End and the East End, a division that is largely unbridged. The average Christian does not feel any obligation to come into personal contact with the East End. He has an impression that missionaries are doing all that is needed, and he is not unwilling to tax himself in order to provide such official workers. It need hardly be said, however, that this is not the conduct to be learned from

Jesus' example. His action was not "official," it was spontaneous, prompted by His love and His conscience of the burdens of the "weary and heavy-laden." He did not act as He did because He was a "Saviour," but because He saw men and women who needed Him, and because with love in His heart He was constrained to draw them up into His own pure joy and to impart to them the hope and faith in which He lived. There are many in our churches who do not feel this constraint at all, between whom and the needs of the poor and distressed there is a great gulf fixed. And this is one of the gravest of our social dangers, grave for the Church and grave, it may be, in its results to the comfortable classes themselves. At any rate, the example of Jesus in this respect has a clear social significance for His true followers.

(2) But it is to be noted particularly that not only did Jesus give Himself to these people, but He set Himself to deal with their social and physical, as well as their religious, needs. He had a gospel to take to them; but it needs to be clearly brought out that while Jesus preached the Gospel to the poor, He made it His business to remove from their lives what rendered it difficult for them to receive the Gospel. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He gave friendship to the lonely. He restored self-respect to those who had lost it. He not only revealed to them their sonship to God, but He made it, at the same time, at least possible for them to understand what that meant and to live it. And in this He showed the way for all true saving work to-day. Without at present raising the question of the Church's duty, it seems clear that this serious atten-

tion to the social needs of the time is the path of Christian discipleship. One of the main difficulties in the way of Christian workers to-day, a difficulty that sometimes fills them with despair, is that their Gospel is preached to people who are disabled from believing, and often even from understanding it by the conditions in which they pass their lives. It need not be denied that, when the Gospel is once in a man's heart, it will change his environment, but the trouble is to get it there. With what hope can one preach Christ to men and women besotted with drink, barbarised by their daily existence, accustomed to insanitary and even indecent surroundings? And again, with what effect can one address men and women embittered by the idea that the very religion one preaches is bound up with the system that perpetuates their wrongs? What spiritual life or spiritual interest is possible in these circumstances? It is not enough to open mission halls and preach a spiritual gospel. It is not enough even to organize Institutional Churches. These are not really solving the problem. What is wanted is what Jesus gave, a definite effort to deal with the facts which stand in the way of happiness and freedom for the very poor. What is wanted is a brave Christian handling of such facts as have already been mentioned—sweated labour, unemployment, and low wages. One reason why this effort is not made is that so many men who are identified with Christianity are interested in the perpetuation of these evils. But such hindrances ought not to keep the Christian conscience from asserting itself and taking the way of Jesus. For until that way is taken, and an honest and courageous witness is borne by Christian men in

regard to these intolerable evils, the Gospel of Christ will find its way to the hearts of the poor and the outcast closed.

II

The explicit teaching of Jesus in His words does not come behind His example in its social significance. The words of Jesus are, in fact, simply the translation of His own life into instruction for others, the means by which He endeavoured to impart to His disciples the aims and motives that inspired and governed His conduct.

1. The first point to notice is the severe criticism His teaching contains of the religious world and the religious authorities of His own time and people. His spirit was entirely opposite to theirs. His conduct to the "outsiders" was in itself a stern rebuke of theirs. And they were not blind to this. They hated Jesus for His unconventional attitude to the outcast classes at least as much as for anything else He did or said. But He was not slow to give utterance to this implied criticism. So evil did He consider their practice in this respect, so unworthy of religious guides, that He denounced it in language the fearless courage of which was enough of itself to have made His doom certain. He stigmatized in burning words their cruel and heedless comfort, their selfish hardness, their frigid respectability, and, above all, their Olympian indifference to the sin and distress of those whom God still loved as His children. It is evident that His whole soul was in these denunciations of Pharisaism and Scribism, and that He felt deeply the contrast between their spirit and that which ought to possess true religious

guides. And it must therefore be inferred that these scathing words of Jesus contain not only an essential part of His social teaching, but a very important part, because they reveal, if only negatively, His deepest thought and feeling about what the attitude of religion should be to the social needs of a people. Nothing can be very much worse in Jesus' estimate than the selfish indifference of the Pharisee, that religious habit which is concerned mainly about details of worship and creed, about the prosperity of a sect, about petty questions of policy and party, while vice and misery and godlessness remain unredeemed. Is it too much to say that these tremendous utterances of Jesus have still a much-needed message for the religious world of our day? Can we read without conviction or shame the scathing language in which Jesus brands with His contempt a religion that is immersed in what are, after all, trifling matters of selfish concern, while the great world is lying in the grip of evils that need for their cure all the love and devotion and sacrifice which the religious can give?

2. Turning from the negative aspect of our Lord's social teaching, we are met by His great positive message in the proclamation of the kingdom of God. This phrase was constantly on His lips and in His mind (it is found some hundred-and-twelve times in the Gospels), and represents a large part of what Jesus had to say on social problems. A very great deal has of course been written on this theme which is more or less familiar to those interested in New Testament Theology. It will therefore merely be necessary here to deal with it briefly and only in its bearing on our main theme.

(1) First of all the kingdom of God was *a spiritual reality*. It was composed of men and women who are all children of the one Father. Jesus laid constant emphasis on the necessity of regeneration, on the value of an experience of sonship to God, on the value of the individual soul. This was how the kingdom was to come, through the grace of God working on individuals and making them children of God, or enabling them to realise that they were children of God. The kingdom of God was a kingdom of souls redeemed by God's grace and awakened to the Father's love. The very keenest social reformers must acknowledge the prominence of this spiritual element in the words of Jesus. They give the individual his full rights. The soul is the key of the position. And all this implies that it is to the grace of God we must look for the power to deal with the needs of the world. That is part of the message of Jesus in this great conception of the kingdom. "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is very difficult in looking at any great question to keep both sides in view, but it is especially important to do so in this matter of social reform. It is often said, for example, that it is futile to change the circumstances of a man while you leave the man himself unchanged. As a statement of one side of the truth that may not only be admitted, but it may be supported by the authority of Jesus. It is the burden of many of His sayings. And it is a truth that needs to be kept clearly to the front. We can have no hope of solving the hardest of our social problems without the Gospel of Christ. And whatever system omits this factor of the importance of individual regeneration is bound to fail in its social aim.

(2) But the kingdom of God was also a *great social ideal.* It meant to Jesus a regenerated society. It was His dream of the future, of the social system transfigured by love and mutual service. It is surely no irreverence to say that Jesus was the greatest of all the Dreamers who have lifted the world up and on by their glorious Visions. And we cannot be wrong in interpreting His dream on social lines. What He saw was a society of men and women happy instead of miserable, bound into a brotherhood instead of being alienated by class feeling, living trustfully in the peace of God instead of being tormented by care, contributing each and all to the common welfare instead of striving each one for his own supremacy. It is a noble spectacle the Gospels present to us of this one Soul preaching this splendid ideal in an almost outworn world, casting this thought of a transfigured society into the life of mankind to act at once as a ferment and a magnet in our speculation and our striving. It could hardly be forgotten. And in point of fact it never has. It has been continuously operative and creative of great movements. It was behind Dante's great vision of a universal spiritual monarchy. It was behind Mazzini's efforts for a united Italy. It was the inspiration of Maurice and Kingsley. And, however far many of our present-day writers on social reform may conceive themselves to be from the theology of Christianity, it is the real source of that thought of a new social order which has begun to mean so much to our generation. Perhaps it is doing less than justice to the social ideal of Jesus to call it a dream. For there is nothing vague in it. It was a definite programme, a community of

men and women, free, happy and strong. And when one thinks of what it was to Jesus Himself, of the passion and faith with which He preached it, one cannot help feeling how great a creative force is in it, and how needful it is that we should grasp it and hold it up before ourselves. We would not find our social problems nearly so hard if Christians to-day believed in this renewed social order and prayed for it and strove for it as Jesus did.

(3) This consideration receives added force when we remember that in the intention of Jesus His social ideal was to be fulfilled by personal service on the part of His disciples. The Gospels leave us in no doubt of His purpose or His method. He knew that the coming of the kingdom lay in the future, and He therefore proceeded to train men to live for it. He put His own spirit in them, His love for the poor, His unworldliness, His faith, and He sent them out to take the kingdom, which was thus present in their lives, to the lives of others, and especially to the poor, the sick and the outcast. And thus all His followers were bound to the service of the kingdom—to spread it, to make it a reality, to carry its brotherhood, joy, holiness and faith to the masses of men who were outside it. And service to the kingdom was service both to the souls and bodies of men. The parable of the Good Samaritan and the closing paragraph of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew may be cited as the most striking of many passages embodying such teaching.

It is from this point of view also that Jesus looked at all particular social questions. His teaching on wealth may be given as an example. Wealth is a trust (the parable of the Talents); it is also a peril

(the parable of Dives and Lazarus); and, finally, it is a severe test (the rich young ruler). His words about riches are always discouraging: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven," "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," "Blessed are ye poor." If it cannot be said that He condemns wealth, He certainly discourages in His disciples the heaping up of worldly treasure. But this can only be understood when we perceive His point of view. The kingdom is to be first. Everything in His disciples' lives is to serve the ends of the kingdom. Everything else is of small moment, and whatever is a peril to this is dangerous. "Seek first the kingdom of God."

3. In addition to these two elements in our Lord's social teaching—His criticism of the contemporary religious world and His ideal of a renewed social order—another must be mentioned which runs through a large part of His teaching, and is at the same time of great social value—namely, His demand for considerateness. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Bishop Gore, in his Bampton lectures, singles this out as the characteristic Christian grace. It is a special development of the duty of love, love that is thoughtful and especially imaginative—"Love thy neighbour as thyself." That is to say, think yourself into his place and circumstances, and then give him, not what you would desire if you were in his place, but what you would then deem fair and therefore right. In these circumstances, what treatment would do you most good, and bring the best out of you, and be at the same time just to you? This principle of thoughtful love strikes at the root of individual selfishness, of class feeling, and par-

ticularly of self-seeking economics. How powerfully it would contribute to the solution of some of our hardest problems, if it were practised, can easily be shown. The relation of employers to employed is a good instance. Probably no State enactments would make this relation satisfactory; but the element in it that creates the greatest part of the trouble would disappear at once if there was considerateness on both sides. A still better example is the existence of sweated labour. If Christian men asked themselves what this really would mean for *them*, what life under such conditions would mean for them or their daughters, the thing would not be tolerated any longer. It may be urged that this could never be made the law of industrial organization. But that is not how the principle is to be applied. It is an individual law of the spirit; it is a matter of loyalty to the conscience which Jesus has created in His followers. And there cannot be the slightest doubt that, if it were widely applied, it would change the face of society. Nor can it be for a moment admitted that we are dealing with a principle which is visionary and unpractical—good enough for theory, but not for real life. For it is just this principle that has governed the development of the social conscience and been the impulse in social progress, as Mr. Kidd has so ably shown in his *Social Evolution*. What is it that has compelled men living in comfort themselves to concern themselves with the condition of their less fortunate brethren but just this very social principle? It is a striking thing that social reform has so generally come from above, and not been forced from below. At the present time the most advanced thinkers on social questions and the

most extreme reformers are to be found, not in the working class, but in the upper middle class, which is the most comfortable and most refined element in our population. The inference from this is not that such reform is merely academic, but that the movements that have raised classes out of social oppression have generally come from the awakened conscience of those who were themselves living in comfort, but who were compelled by this very imaginative love, that Jesus lays down as the guide of our social conduct, to think themselves into the condition of those less fortunately situated. And this historical fruitfulness of the principle of considerateness encourages us to believe that a clearer grasp of the teaching of Jesus will act powerfully on our present social order in the direction of a further and better social evolution. For it is clear that, in the light of the words and example of Jesus, there is a great deal in the present social system which stands condemned. A system that throws great quantities of wealth into a few hands and leaves masses of the population in utter poverty, that does much to encourage the alienation of classes by its unrestricted competitions, that is attended by such evils as sweating, unemployment, bad housing, and wages that are insufficient to sustain life, will find it difficult to justify itself before the bar of Jesus.

III

We turn now to consider the duty of the Christian Church in the light of the conclusions already reached. How is the Church to vindicate and apply this social message of Jesus? This is one of the most pressing

questions facing her at the present moment, and on the answer she gives to it will depend largely her future influence in the national life.

We are met at the outset by a contention which is very widely held, that the Church has nothing to do with such questions at all. It is her business to preach the Gospel and save souls. If she has a function in regard to social problems at all it is of the most indirect kind. Let her make men Christian, and Christian men will then Christianize the social order. Her work, at any rate, is purely spiritual, and she will be doing the best service by attending to that faithfully. In a recent essay Professor Harnack has put this view with his accustomed force and clearness: "At the present time Christianity is being reproached with never, at any time in its history, having taken the lead in economic reforms. Even if the facts were in accordance with this sweeping statement, it would be no real reproach, in view of the distinctive character of the Christian religion. It is enough if religion prepares men's minds for great economic changes, . . . if it foresees the new moral duties which these impose; if it knows how to adapt itself to them, and perceives the right moment at which to step in with its forces, and do its work. A religion which aims at saving the soul and transforming the inner man, and which regards a change in outward circumstances as but a small matter in comparison with the power of evil, can only follow in the wake of earthly changes and exercise an after influence; it is not qualified to lead the way in economic developments." "As a Christian Church," he says later, referring to the Roman Catholic Church, "it cannot disregard the

fact that the peace promised by the Gospel is a peace which the world cannot give, and that the improvement of economic conditions is not the duty of religion. . . . After all, it must be remembered that the chief task of the Church is still the preaching of the Gospel, that is to say, the message of redemption and of eternal life." These last words will be unreservedly accepted by all Christians. It must always be the main business of the Church to preach Christ, and to win souls to Him. But, without raising the question as to what is included in the preaching of Christ and of redemption, good reasons can be offered in opposition to the view that the improvement of economic conditions is no part of the duty of religion, and that the Church must confine herself to "spiritual" functions.

(1) One reason is that Jesus Himself did not do so. He concerned Himself largely (as has been shown) with these very physical and social needs that constitute our "economic conditions" to-day. The example He chose of what neighbourliness implied was the succour of a man who was lying on the roadside in distress, and He held up to scorn the representatives of the Church of the time for their callous neglect of this claim on their love. Jesus was, of course, only doing what the prophets had done when He cared for social conditions, and He was followed in this by the early Church. Can the Church to-day be wrong in following the example of her Master? Can she be doing her part faithfully if she fails to imitate Him in her ministry and neglects the very needs He laboured to meet? The spirituality which would prevent a Church from touching economic conditions can hardly be recog-

nised as the spirituality of the Lord. It is rather a fruit of that ascetic view of life which He deliberately condemned. No work can pretend to be more spiritual than the work of Jesus Himself, who fed the hungry, healed the sick, rescued the outcast, and lifted the fallen.

(2) Another reason is that, if the social problems are not to be solved by the Church alone, neither can they be solved by the State alone. It is not denied that the State has a Christian character, or ought to have. But there is no sufficient security for this unless in the closer union of Church and State in the endeavour to find a way of dealing effectively with the pressing problems of the social order. The Elberfeld system in Germany, which was suggested and originated by the work of Dr. Chalmers in Glasgow, is a good instance of how State action and voluntary action can be united in the meeting of a social need. And probably the most hopeful prospect of solving our own difficult questions lies in such a combination on a larger scale, in which the Church would act as a conscience to the State and also a practical helper, and the State would act as a controlling and executive force. But for this union of faith and action a Church is needed which is alive to the problems of the time and prepared to apply to them the principles of her Master's life and teaching.

(3) Another reason why the Church must concern herself with economic conditions is that a living Church can never stand apart from the great movements of an age without suffering grave injury. The social problem is the problem of our time, and everywhere we find the uprising of a new conscience about it. Is it wise or right for the Church to say that

she has neither part nor lot in such a movement? Surely no Church which is in touch with the characteristic and deepest thoughts and emotions of an age can take such a position. Hitherto this movement of social interest and activity has been too much outside the Church, and one regrettable result has been to throw the leadership of the poor into the hands of those who are outside the Church and out of sympathy with its creed. One cannot but feel that it is a serious reflection on the Church of our time that the people who are longing for better conditions of life and labour have had to look for sympathy and leadership elsewhere. The Labour movement has become a religion to many men and women largely because the Church has not shown a real interest in their lot and has not been ready to champion their just cause. It is neither necessary nor desirable that the Church should enter the political sphere or take sides in political or party warfare. And if this means (as it does) that she ought not to commit herself to any one method of social redemption, it also means that she ought not to commit herself against it either. If the Church should not throw herself on the side of Socialism, neither should she take a side against it. There should be room and opportunity for both sides in the Church's life and activity. Whatever is true and sound in the socialist contention will be realised in the future economic arrangements of our country, and it would be neither wise nor right for the Church to take up an entirely hostile attitude to the whole socialist movement. But while thus remaining free from any one-sided attachment to a party, the Church has a clear path of duty as to economic conditions.

If she finds such conditions seriously hindering her work, if there are injustices which prevent men and women from realising what they were meant to be, if there are social conditions which make the offer of the Gospel seem a mockery, the Church is bound to do her part, with all the great force at her command, in the effort to sweep these oppressive conditions out of existence. By many in the Churches this obligation is already admitted in the case of the drink traffic. But if it be clear in this case, why not in regard to other evils just as hostile to the Gospel? If the Church finds sweating and bad housing and excessive poverty blocking the way of Christ to the masses of our land, can it be other than her duty to go forward in the strength of Christ and deal with them?

What the Church can do and ought to do, then, in vindicating the teaching of her Master, becomes plain.

1. Let her reassert the plain social principles that underlie all the life and teaching of her Lord. Such as these*: (1) Our neighbours are all those who need us, and we are to love them as ourselves; (2) All souls are God's; therefore all oppression of the poor, and all defrauding of the wage-earner of his right to a just return for his labour are of the devil; (3) The law of the Christian life is the service of the weak, and those who cannot help themselves; (4) The poor are the special objects of Christian love; (5) Wealth is a trust, and a means, not an end; (6) "Whatsoever ye would that men should do

* See *Moral Witness of the Church on Economic Subjects.* A report presented to the House of Convocation by a Joint Committee. S.P.C.K., 1907.

to you, do ye even so to them." These are some of the essential parts of real Christianity, and we need to-day a new vision of what they mean.

2. Let the Church realise and reassert the social ideal of the kingdom of God. It has been treated too long as a mere cold and lifeless idea. So much has this been the case that many minds regard the phrase with a certain amount of antipathy. This is a misfortune, for to Jesus it meant something very great, and all the passion and warmth of His love and faith were concentrated on it. And therefore one part of the Church's duty is to rescue this great social idea of Jesus from the misconception under which it lies concealed, to catch something of the Lord's own view of it, and to realise that the fulfilment of that hope of Jesus is *her* business as it was His. He lived to make the kingdom of God a reality. She lives for the same end, not only to save individual souls, but to work and pray for the coming of a new creation on earth, for the regeneration of society, so that it may reflect the love and life that were lavished on it by Jesus.

3. Let the Church throw her influence on the side of righteousness in the treatment of the poor and the nation's workers. Bishop Gore says that behind some of the more technical and political proposals of the workers, there is "a fundamental appeal for justice which the Christian Church cannot ignore." No one will deny this who realises at all what the conditions are amid which many of our people are spending their lives, and which lack many of the essentials of physical and moral well-being. People who live amid such conditions, and receive often a wage on which no human being could properly

keep soul and body together, cannot be expected to realise the dignity of a true manhood or womanhood. It is not wonderful that such facts produce Socialists. And if to many in the Church the Socialist way of remedying them seems wrong, that only emphasizes the duty of the Church at least to bear a fearless and clear witness on behalf of justice. If she came forward with such a public testimony, not only would her way to the hearts of the masses be cleared for her spiritual message, but she would be proving herself true to her divine mission and fulfilling the succession of the true Church in all ages.

4. Once more: it is the part of the Church to supply personal service in the spirit of the life of Jesus and in response to His summons. It has been pointed out that Jesus not only enunciated general principles, but gave Himself to those who needed for their salvation the contact of His pure, joyous, loving nature. This was the great redemptive force in His ministry. There are many different ways in which we can follow Him in this. Christian men and women are doing the same work when they give their service on public boards, on town councils, parish councils, school boards, and Parliament. There is scope, and there is great need, in such work for men and women of Christian convictions and character. Most effective service can thus be given to the kingdom. And in the truest sense such service is in the spirit of our Lord's own life and labours. But, in addition to this, there is one way of service to the kingdom which is urgently called for—the personal contact of the love and faith of Christian people with the ignorance, squalor and

vice of the slums. No one can read a book like Bishop Ingram's *Work in Great Cities* without being deeply impressed by the power for good which can be exercised by this personal contact. It is not only the preaching of Christ that is needed, but the power of Christ in living, loving, believing men and women. It is sympathy, kindness and brotherhood, acting as a leaven amid the darkness and hopelessness that envelop the lives of so many of the "lost" in our own society. In this way alone will the gulf that separates East End and West End be bridged. It was bridged by the ministry of Jesus; it can be bridged by the ministry of those who have learned of Him and been baptized with the spirit of His passion and sacrifice.

These are some of the lines on which action on the part of the Church seems at the present time called for by the life and teaching of her Master. And it only remains to be said that for this work of social redemption the Church has a unique opportunity. In the great company of Christian men and women throughout our land there is a tremendous social force which would be sufficient to solve our hardest problems if it could be elicited and applied. And besides, in the Church, and in the Church alone, there is a sphere prepared for the union in this service of all classes. Her comprehensive platform can easily hold all kinds of opinions; and in the Gospel which all believe there is the living source of those higher enthusiasms and sacrifices in which lies the hope of all social betterment.

What has hitherto prevented the Church from doing the social service for which she is thus so richly endowed has been, first, the fact that she has

been too much identified with one class. The reproach levelled against the Church in ancient times was that she was the Church of the poor. The reproach levelled against her in modern times is that she is the Church of the rich and the comfortable. This has been one serious hindrance to her influence with the masses of the population. Another has been the want in her membership of an awakened social conscience. But it is not too late for the Church to step forward and assume her own place at the head of the social movement of our time. The masses are becoming aware of the new spirit that is arising in the Churches, and they are keenly alive to the value of the help that may thus be given in solving the most urgent of our social questions. There is not the antipathy to the Church that there used to be among the working people who feel deeply on these matters. There is a greater readiness to believe in her *bona fides*, and to co-operate with her in social work. Many acute observers believe that the Church has an opportunity such as she has not had for a long time. Is she ready to take advantage of it?

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